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The Development of Pupil Voice in a One  
Form Entry Primary School in the North East  
of England: Who Benefits and Who Learns?

Dr. Sandra Jayne Whitton

Submission for Doctor of Education

Department of Education

University of Durham

2011

# ABSTRACT

This research study examines the development of pupil voice activities within a one-form entry primary school in northern England over a three-year period through a mainly qualitative approach. The views of both teaching and non-teaching staff have been gathered through recorded semi-structured interviews at the beginning, middle and end of the research period with additional views from teachers gathered through questionnaires at the end of the first year. The views of all pupils and parents have been obtained from the Annual Questionnaires for 2008, 2009 and 2010.

Findings clearly indicate that the increase in pupil voice activities has had a positive impact on the school: pupils are more involved in decision-making and in shaping the direction of the school. This appears to be welcomed by pupils, teachers and parents alike. Initial concerns from teaching staff that increased pupil voice may result in their own role being diminished have been dispelled. Indeed teachers are now comfortable with consulting pupils over the content and direction of their topic planning as well as seeking feedback about their teaching. Whilst this engagement with pupils over teaching and curriculum issues is still at an early stage, all teachers have embraced pupil voice input into both general and class-based activities, with some commenting on how this has further enhanced their own performance. A review of assessments carried out by external bodies has shown that the school has become more effective and whilst it would be wrong to attribute this increase in school performance solely to the development of pupil voice, it is worth noting that such activities have had no detrimental effect.

However, although the picture portrayed seems very optimistic, it is important to note that this has taken over three years of steady development to achieve and has involved a considerable commitment from all involved. In addition, as the head teacher of the school, the researcher was able to constantly drive this initiative forward, dedicate the time needed for its implementation and to provide the necessary support and resources to ensure its success. Not all teachers interested in developing this area will be in such a privileged position.

# Acknowledgements

Thank you to my lovely family – my husband Nigel, my children Graham and Andrew, and my dad Robert, for providing love and support throughout this process.

Thank you also to all members of my school community and in particular to those staff at my primary school who very generously gave of their time and subjected themselves to the interview process on two or three occasions!

This work is dedicated to my mum Irene, who typed so many of my assignments when I was an undergraduate and who would have been so proud of all I have achieved - thank you, mum.

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## Declaration

No part of the material contained in this thesis has previously been submitted by the author for a degree at Durham University or in any other institution. All the work presented here is the sole work of the author.

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# CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

## a. Background

For over two decades schools in England and Wales have been subject to radical change, starting with the 1988 Education Reform Act, moving through various versions of the National Curriculum in the early 90s to the launch of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies by the late 90s. In 2003 a call for “Excellence and Enjoyment” (DfES (2003b)) coincided with the Government Green Paper *Every Child Matters* (DfES (2003a)). 2006 saw the re-launch of the Literacy and Numeracy strategies, following the second year where the Government failed to meet its targets at Key Stage 2 for both English and Mathematics. Throughout this time, billions of pounds have been spent - arguably to little effect (Tymms (2004)) whilst HMSO and others have been kept busy publishing drafts and redrafts of documents, schemes of work and the like. Teachers, educationalists and politicians have been consulted and their views considered to some degree. However, whilst the purpose behind this drive for improvement has been to raise standards for pupils in order to enhance their life chances, as stated in the much quoted ‘Every Child Matters’ (DfES (2003a p1)) the extent to which pupils have been consulted by the architects of these documents has been minimal.

Arguably a shift started to occur around the time of The Education Act 2002 which not only acknowledged the rights of children to be consulted, but also placed a responsibility on both local authorities and governing bodies to:

“have regard to any guidance given from time to time by the Secretary of State..... about consultation with pupils in connection with the taking of decisions affecting them” (Education Act 2002, Section 176)

By legislating for this, the UK Government was strongly indicating that it was taking account of the UN Convention whilst making it clear that it expected schools and local authorities to do likewise. Since then, many external awards available to schools now acknowledge the value of pupil input by including some aspect where the views and involvement of pupils is assessed. This ranges from the approach of

‘Investors in Children’ which is carried out by an external assessor meeting and talking to children, with adults involved only at the feedback meeting when the final report is shared, through to a group of pupils (selected by the school) meeting with an external assessor to confirm views already presented by adults (such as Unicef and Artsmark).

Following the 2002 Act, the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) issued the document “Working Together: Giving Children and Young People a Say” in 2004, within which Stephen Twigg (Minister for Schools at the time) clearly stated the belief that:

“giving children and young people a say in decisions that affect them will impact positively on standards, behaviour and inclusion.” (DfES (2004) pi)

In the introduction to this document Twigg calls for a ‘cultural shift’ so that children can actively participate in the things which concern them. The document is intended to provide guidance and promote best practice, thus showing the Government’s intention to take this matter seriously.

This move to involve young people in their school experience has generally been termed ‘pupil/student’ participation’ or ‘pupil/student voice’. Some writers may use the term ‘pupil’ or ‘student’ synonymously (Fielding (2006), Robinson and Taylor (2007)) whilst others may differentiate their use according to the age of the young person. Robinson and Taylor (2007, p6) refer to the practice adopted by the UN Convention, where the under 12s are referred to as ‘children’ whilst those aged between 12 and 17 are termed ‘students’. Within this work I use both terms, mainly to reflect the terminology adopted by those researchers I make reference to.

Teasing out the difference between ‘pupil participation’ and ‘pupil voice’ may be equally problematic. Some researchers seem to use the term ‘voice’ as meaning pupils being able to have a say or “express their feelings or views” (Robinson and Taylor (2007 p6)), with ‘pupil participation’ meaning more active involvement or collaboration. Again, many researchers may also use these terms interchangeably and once more, I will tend to mirror those researchers I encounter. Nevertheless, it is worth considering some definitions of these terms, for example this definition of



pupil participation from the DfES document 'Working Together Giving Children and Young People a Say':

"By pupil participation we mean adults working with children and young people to develop ways of ensuring that their views are heard and valued...." (DfES (2004) p2)

This indicates a very positive move towards promoting the rights of the child, however it does suggest that pupil participation relies on adult involvement. Professor Rudduck (2005) offers a very clear definition of pupil voice, which also implies adult involvement:

"Pupil voice is the consultative wing of pupil participation. Consultation is about talking with pupils about things that matter in school. It may involve: conversations about teaching and learning; seeking advice from pupils about new initiatives; inviting comment on ways of solving problems that are affecting the teacher's right to teach and the pupil's right to learn; inviting evaluative comment on recent developments in school or classroom policy and practice." (Rudduck (2005), p1)

As can be seen this definition involves consultation with pupils into aspects of their school experience including factors such as environment, resources and teaching and learning. Some researchers (Fielding and Bragg (2003), MacBeath et al. (2003) etc.) go further than just consultation – which in itself suggests that pupils have to be invited to participate - and look towards pupils becoming genuine partners within education and thus able to come forward with their own ideas and suggestions without waiting to be asked.

The rise in prominence of pupil voice can be set alongside the introduction of Unicef's 'Rights Respecting' award for schools and organisations which has arguably produced an increased focus in the United Nations' Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989). In addition, the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) developed a curriculum for Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) (2000) and for Citizenship education. This has been supplemented by guidance provided on the website of the Qualifications and Curriculum Development Agency (QCDA, formally QCA) as well as that produced by the DCSF for the development

of Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning in 2005. All three clearly place an emphasis on pupils developing their sense of responsibility and place within the wider community:

“PSHE and citizenship aim to equip children with the knowledge, skills and understanding they need to develop personally and socially and to make positive choices as they grow and move into adult life and contribute to their communities and society.”  
(QCDA (2009) p1)

It would seem perverse to develop such skills and awareness without allowing pupils to utilise these in their own workplace - the school, and many publications emanating from DCSF and QCDA in the current decade give mention to pupil voice in some form, urging schools to ‘consult with pupils’ and to ‘take pupils’ views into consideration’. As MacBeath et al. state:

“The importance of consulting pupils about their views on their schools and their learning is increasingly accepted. It is even coming to be inscribed within government policy and directives.”

(MacBeath, Demetriou, Rudduck & Myers (2003) pi)

One example of this can be seen in the *School Profile*, introduced in the 2005 Education Act. This report, which schools were required to complete, included a section entitled: “What have pupils told us about the school, and what have we done as a result?” – all the more worthy of comment since this is one of only 10 sections within the report. In the same year, Ofsted introduced this as a new focus within the Section 5 of the inspection format, requiring inspectors to assess and report on whether schools ask pupils for their views and the extent to which they then act on their responses. This was extended in 2009 in the revised Self Evaluation Form (SEF) (Ofsted (2009)) which required schools to evaluate and record the extent to which pupils are engaged in their own learning within school, thus widening the concept of pupil participation to include teaching and learning.

However, asking pupils what they think is one thing – sadly this in itself is no guarantee that anyone is actually listening to what is being said. In addition, whilst

some schools have been developing particular aspects, such as school councils, for over fifty years and take pupil consultation very seriously, it remains difficult to establish the extent to which many schools may be merely playing lip service to the *notion* of pupil voice. For example, often school councils may be made up of one member of each class, traditionally voted for by others (see English & Newton (2005), Arnot et al. (2004), Robinson (2006)). By this selection procedure, it is almost always bright, articulate and popular children who become the voice of the class. If this is the case then many children have little or no true representation in their school. If we are to take seriously the position “Every Child Matters” then schools must develop ways in which pupil voice can be heard and can be truly representative beyond simply having a school council, however good it may be.

Considering this issue of inclusion, it may be surprising to some that one of the first major documents from the DfES to acknowledge the right of pupils to have a voice was the SEN Code of Practice (2001) which devotes a whole chapter to the subject of pupil participation. Indeed, Chapter 3 opens with this statement:

“Children, who are capable of forming views, have a right to receive and make known information, to express an opinion, and to have that opinion taken into account in any matters affecting them. The views of the child should be given due weight according to the age, maturity and capability of the child.”  
(DfES (2001) p27)

making direct reference to Articles 12 and 13 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. Although it clearly states that it is a school’s responsibility to engage with pupils and determine their views, it does acknowledge that while:

“this may not always be easy..... the principle of seeking and taking account of the ascertainable views of the child or young person is an important one.”  
(ibid, Section 3.3, p27).

The Code of Practice, which was seen by some as a ground-breaking document on its introduction, was quite clear in its expectations of pupil involvement at all levels and stated that when children are undergoing Statutory Assessment:

*“LEAs should also seek to ascertain the views of children and young people as part of the assessment. They will be able to contribute valuable information about themselves and the ways in which they would like their needs to be met.”* (DfES (2001) p92)

thus encouraging schools to, at the very least, attempt to determine the views of the young people they work with, whatever their level of ability.

As can be seen, at this time schools and local authorities have a clear responsibility to ensure that all pupils have the opportunity to put forward their views regarding their school experience, including aspects of teaching, learning and the curriculum. A range of external bodies, whether those assessing a school's quality and 'fitness for purpose', such as Ofsted, or those determining whether a school has fulfilled the requirements for some award, are interested in the degree to which schools engage young people in their own learning, take account of their views and respond to their suggestions. Thus it would seem that a detailed analysis into the development of pupil voice within school would be not only timely but also highly appropriate.

## **b. Purpose of Study**

The purpose of the research was two-fold: firstly I wanted to analyse the development of pupil voice in a primary school, charting how it grows and develops and secondly I wanted to determine whether the development of pupil voice activities in school could help improve the quality of teaching and learning in classrooms. In order to achieve this I examined the development of pupil voice over a three-year period and considered the extent to which the school moved from an organisation where pupils' views were infrequently sought, generally over minor matters, to one where pupils have a much greater say into more significant issues such as resource selection, curriculum development and feedback into teaching and learning - thus beginning to shape their own learning experiences within school. My research aimed to address the following questions:

1. Do pupil voice activities change a school culture?

2. Can the development of pupil voice within a school help move a school from a performance driven culture to a pupil-centred learning culture?
3. Does the growth of pupil voice activities have a positive or negative impact on staff?

In order to facilitate the investigation of these questions the attitudes of staff, pupils and parents were examined, changes to teaching practice noted and levels of school success monitored. Whilst gathering data regarding views and opinions of staff can be relatively straightforward with the use of interviews and questionnaires, assessing the possible change in a school culture can be more challenging as ethos by its nature is arguably less tangible and I review this more fully in Chapter 2. However, one way of assessing the degree to which the culture of a school may change is to consider the extent to which pupils speak, are encouraged to speak, and are then listened to. This area is explored in some detail by Fielding (2001) and forms part of the introduction to Chapter 4 (see p55).

### **c. Data Sources**

During the course of the study seven teachers and six non-teaching staff were interviewed. Of these, six teaching staff and four non-teaching staff were interviewed at the beginning of the research whilst all thirteen participants, including the three additional members (two of whom were new to the school) were interviewed at the end of the second and third years of the research period. All seven teachers participated in the questionnaire at the end of the first year.

Interviews were recorded using a small device that was unobtrusive (all staff had given their consent to being recorded) and all transcripts were typed up and are included as Appendix 3 (Teachers) and Appendix 4 (Non-Teachers). This proved a very useful way of gathering data as pauses were clear on tape, highlighting uncertainties and attitudes to issues raised – although this gives rise to the issue of subjectivity and so the issue of validity is discussed in Chapter 3. The initial questions were repeated in the second interview and supplemented by a few additional questions. The mid-point questionnaire was used to explore attitudes and the extent to which any progress was being made. Final interviews focused on

participant's assessment of the degree of change within school brought about by pupil voice and the impact these activities had had within both class and school.

The views of parents and pupils were gathered from Annual Questionnaires and the results are given in Appendix 6 (Pupils) and Appendix 7 (Parents). Comments from pupils themselves brought about a review of the pupil questionnaires for 2010. Pupils had noted that the younger children had difficulty in understanding the questionnaires they were completing. This led me to consider the suitability of our Annual Pupil Questionnaire and our Pupils As Researchers Group helped me to devise a separate Infant Pupil Questionnaire which can be seen in Appendix 6. Additional pupil views were collected more informally following specific comments from pupils regarding pupil voice activities they were involved in such as the Enterprise Group, Pupils as Researchers, School Council etc.

As the school underwent a Section 5 Inspection by Ofsted just prior to the start of the research period in 2007, and then again in the final year of the research period 2010, the resulting reports were reviewed and found to provide some helpful comments as to the progress of pupil involvement within the school. These are presented in Chapter 5 (pages 149 – 150).

Following this introduction, the thesis is presented in five additional chapters. Chapter 2 reviews current thinking regarding pupil voice, including consideration given to the external context and a brief examination of school improvement; Chapter 3 explains the methodological approaches used within this project; Chapter 4 outlines the results which are then explored in Chapter 5, which also offers explanations. Finally, Chapter 6 attempts to offer some recommendations and conclusions.

## **CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **a. Introduction**

In order to analyse any development within my school I have always found it helpful to consider the background to that initiative, along with the impact it may have on school improvement and for this reason, I looked carefully at the background against which the development of pupil voice was taking place, as outlined previously in Chapter 1. I then carried out a detailed review of literature relating to pupil voice prior to embarking on this research project, and also looked at appropriate literature on school improvement. This chapter includes my analysis of these as follows:

Firstly I consider relevant literature relating to pupil voice. Most of this has taken place within the UK within the last two decades, not only because this has seemed most appropriate for my purposes, but also because the UK seems to have produced some of the most influential researchers in this field at this time. I have considered developments in both primary and secondary schools and throughout my reading have encountered very little in the way of negative comments about the overall effectiveness of pupil voice. This seems somewhat unusual in research terms – as usually research into an area produces opposing or contradictory viewpoints. Having struggled with this initially, I spent no little time on trying to source reliable research which had produced broadly negative accounts. Whilst most research indicated potential or even real barriers, concerns or problems relating to pupil voice, virtually all accounts I encountered concluded that the overall results were positive. This may be because most current research has been carried out by advocates of pupil voice, thus influencing the questions they have posed. To reflect this picture, my analysis examines various aspects of pupil voice with the penultimate section focussing on ‘potential problems and pitfalls’.

Following this review of pupil voice, I take a brief, but relevant look at what school improvement means and the potential relationship between this and pupil voice, particularly focussing on the contribution the development of pupil voice may be able to make to school improvement.

## b. Pupil Voice

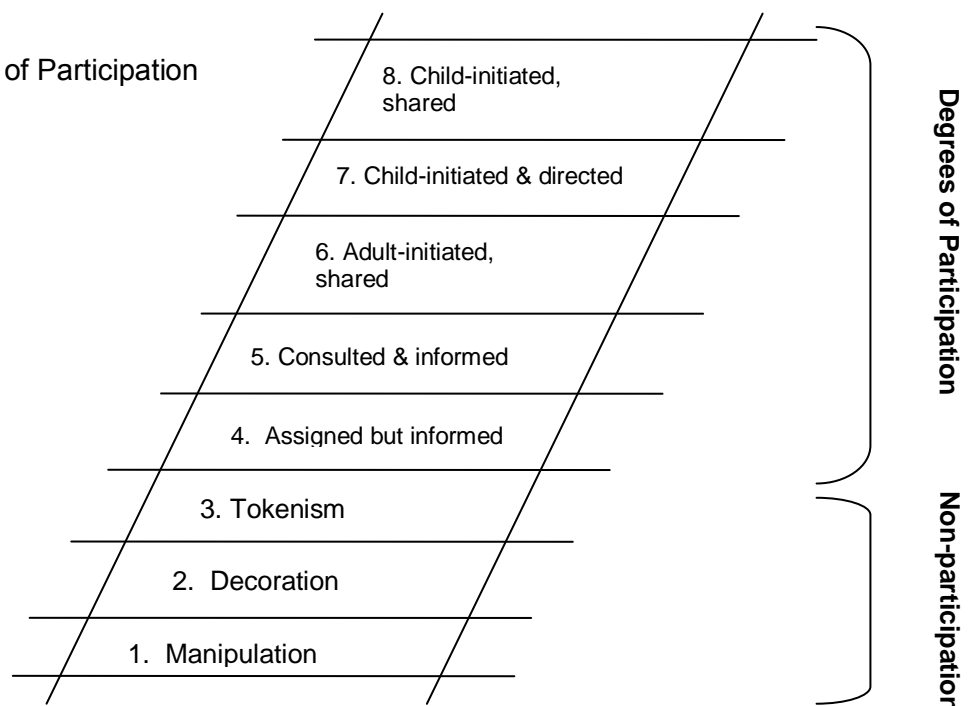
There has been a growing body of literature relating to pupil voice, particularly over the last twenty years, covering a range of aspects from theories surrounding pupil involvement through to research covering pupil input into aspects such as school improvement, the curriculum and learning. To facilitate this literature review I have grouped aspects together under the following headings, which shall then be addressed in turn:

- i. Ladder of Participation
- ii. Perspectives on Pupil Participation
- iii. Listening to Pupils
- iv. Pupils as Researchers
- v. Curriculum, Learning and Improvement
- vi. Potential Problems and Pitfalls
- vii. Conclusion

### i. Ladder of Participation

Whilst researchers into pupil voice may hold slightly different perspectives, most share the belief that pupil consultation can occur on a number of levels. Hart (1992) devised a 'Ladder of Participation' which he later expanded upon (1997) and which is replicated in Figure 1 below:

Figure 1:  
Hart's Ladder of Participation



(Hart (1997) p41)



Hart states that the first three rungs, *manipulation*, when adults use children to carry their own messages with no involvement/engagement with the children; *decoration*, children promoting a cause without any understanding/involvement in the cause, and *tokenism*, where children may seem to be involved but in reality have little choice in subject matter or method of involvement, are unacceptable as they do not represent true consultation or engagement with pupils.

On the other hand, he doesn't see the other rungs as always being increasingly superior, rather children will participate at a level appropriate to the demands of the activity – the '*important principle to remember is **choice***' (Hart (1997) p42). He sees pupil participation within schools as an ongoing process, with pupils engaging in a range of activities to support the work of the school. Who decides what level of support is required may be determined by the pupils themselves and at times this may be supported by adults.

This metaphor of a ladder can be useful, particularly for those engaging in pupil voice activities for the first time as it clearly separates out the different levels at

Figure 2: Flutter and Rudduck's Ladder of Pupil Participation

<p><b>4. Pupils as fully active participants and co-researchers</b>  <i>Pupils and teachers jointly initiate enquiry; pupils play an active role in decision making; together with teachers, they plan action in the light of data and review impact of the intervention.</i></p>
<p><b>3. Pupils as Researchers</b>  <i>Pupils are involved in enquiry and have an active role in decision making; there will be feedback and discussion with pupils regarding findings drawn from the data.</i></p>
<p><b>2. Pupils as active participants</b>  <i>Teachers initiate enquiry and interpret the data but pupils are taking some role in decision making; there is likely to be some feedback to pupils on the findings drawn from the data.</i></p>
<p><b>1. Listening to pupils</b>  <i>Pupils are a source of data; teachers respond to data but pupils are not involved in discussion of findings; there may be no feedback to pupils; teachers act on the data.</i></p>
<p><b>0. Pupils not consulted</b>  <i>There is no element of pupil participation or pupil consultation within the school.</i></p>

(from Flutter and Rudduck (2004) p16)

which pupils can be consulted, demonstrating what can be achieved. Flutter and Rudduck (2004) used the concept of Hart's Ladder, developing it into five rungs and this is given as figure 2 above. The main point of difference separating their ladder from Hart's is that they see the steps on their ladder as being progressive – you move up the ladder from

“ ‘non-participation’ to the highest stage of fully active participation”

(ibid, p15)

This progressive approach may provide a useful guide to those wishing to embed pupil voice within their schools, suggesting what can be achieved or aimed for next. Both ladders are helpful tools and either can be used as a method of assessing pupil participation, enabling those involved to evaluate whether or not pupil voice is becoming more fully developed.

## **ii. Perspectives on Pupil Participation**

Whilst it has been acknowledged that the UN Convention (1989) has ensured children are entitled to participate in issues which concern them, and whilst the convention “*looks at the rights of children in all spheres of their lives*” (Taylor (2002) p25) it is important to distinguish between an *entitlement* to participate and an *insistence* that pupils participate. As Hart (1997) said above, it is choice which is important. Promoting the development of pupil voice for many schools means providing a range of opportunities which pupils can choose to access, developing a culture where pupils' views are actively sought and considered and where there is a developing input from pupils into aspects of their own learning. This does not mean insisting that every pupil has to share their views or opinions and this is particularly important when you consider that sometimes pupils may not always be certain what their views are. This issue is explored by Johnston and Nicholls (1995) who discuss the experiences of teachers trying to encourage their pupils to have an input into the curriculum. They found that whilst some pupils were keen to have their say, others only wanted to absorb:

“cut-and dried knowledge (and) they thwart teachers who give open-ended assignments to encourage student voice”

(ibid, p95)

which created something of a challenge to staff. However, as one of the main aspects of a teacher's job is to differentiate for pupils, doing so to meet the differing needs of pupils with regard to pupil voice may simply be an extension of what already happens. It seems sensible to assume that pupils will bring their own thoughts and past experiences to pupil voice activities as they do in all other aspects of education - hopefully they will emerge all the richer as a result.

Supporters of pupil voice generally agree on the benefits this can bring to pupils, including developing confidence, effective presentation skills, coaching skills, raised attainment, increased motivation and a more participative approach to learning (see Kellett (2005) p126; Covell et. al. (2008) p323; Fielding (2008) p7 & 11; GTC (2010a) p4; Klein (2003) p116). Robinson and Fielding also noted that some schools have experienced benefits to their school culture brought about through the development of pupil voice (2007, p6 & p23). Sitting alongside these benefits, is Hart's belief (1997) that by developing the participation rights of children we will be developing children who:

“will gradually and naturally come to assume that they have a right and responsibility to be involved with others in caring for any setting in which they play and work.”  
(ibid, pp193 – 194)

Hart is passionate about the sustainable development of our environment and his work takes the issues of rights and responsibilities within pupil voice further. He presents a compelling argument which suggests that the development of participative skills within children, together with an awareness of their responsibility towards our environment, is not just desirable but **essential** (ibid, p192). Hart is not alone in seeing the development of pupil voice as being more than just an 'added extra' that can help improve the experiences of both pupils and schools, but his views go further as he believes that this development is necessary if we are to prepare pupils appropriately for their future life in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

### **iii. Listening to Pupils**

Having established that children have a right to have a say in the things which affect them (Education Act 2002, Section 176) and that this can benefit schools (Flutter and Rudduck (2004); Klein (2003, p116); Dahl (1995, p130)), what

methods can schools adopt to ensure this happens? Rudduck and Fielding (2006) believe that pupil consultation needs to feel real, or believable, to pupils. They call this 'authenticity' and they believe that this requires three things: pupils being involved in deciding the focus; adults being genuinely interested in pupils' opinions and there being follow-through from the aspects explored. Their view is that adults need to learn to listen to pupils and recognise that they have a valid viewpoint. However, they also point out the danger of focussing so much on the views of the pupils that:

“we forget the pivotal role of the teacher in managing change...(as some staff feel)...they need to feel that *they* have a voice....that *they* matter.”  
(ibid, p227)

Nieto (1994, p398) supports this view, stating that greater emphasis should not be placed on pupils' views above the views held by others, agreeing that it is important that staff believe their opinions count too – a view also supported by Noyes (2005, p537).

Whilst it would seem reasonable to support the belief that both pupils' and adults' views are given due consideration, particularly in terms of fairness, an additional factor which should not be forgotten is that put by Lincoln (1995) who noted that:

“teachers acquiring their own voices found greater freedom to help their students do likewise.”  
(ibid, p91)

suggesting that when staff felt valued and empowered themselves they were better able to provide support and encouragement to pupils and thus improve outcomes. This can also help improve the ethos of the school and as has been outlined above, having the right climate can help ensure change is successful. It can also play an important role in supporting staff as they start to develop pupil voice activities.

However, as Bragg (2007) notes:

“adult belief in student voice is essential to realise its potential.”  
(ibid, p506)

and this is a view shared by Lincoln (1995, p89). She believes that before pupils' views can be heard, teachers must be both *willing* to engage in the process and know *how* to go about this, whilst pupils must be properly prepared to participate. There are a variety of resources available which provide advice and support for schools, pupils as well as staff, including the excellent "Consulting Pupils: A Toolkit for Teachers" by MacBeath et. al. (2003); Fielding and Bragg's "Students as Researchers: Making a Difference (2003); Portsmouth Learning Community's resources including the leaflet "What Makes a Listening School" (2006), Robinson's Students as Researchers (2007) training pack, the GTC's Research for Teachers Anthology 3 (2010a) as well as a range of resources from Unicef and Save the Children, many of which are freely available on their websites: [www.unicef.org.uk](http://www.unicef.org.uk) and [www.savethechildren.org.uk](http://www.savethechildren.org.uk).

However, whilst it is useful having a range of resources on which to draw, schools need to decide which resources they are going to use and how to use these. As MacBeath et. al. (2008) noted, pupil voice needs to be:

"addressed coherently rather than through fragmented and piecemeal strategies" (ibid, p26)

Along with most initiatives, its implementation has to be thought through and integrated into school if it is to prove successful, simply trying to 'tack it on' will not work. Arnot et. al. (2004, p88) noted that appropriate training can be useful in helping pupils to find their voice and express their opinions appropriately as well as assisting teachers as they learn to listen, gradually building a culture of participation within the school environment where pupils begin to feel their views are being taken seriously and teachers appreciate what pupils have to offer. This does not happen immediately and requires commitment, as Hart (1997) notes:

"It takes some time to establish a climate of trust wherein children feel that to involve adults does not necessarily mean subjecting themselves to adult control" (ibid, p45)

and this is an important point – pupils should be given the freedom to develop activities over which they can exert some control themselves, otherwise so-called

pupil voice will be nothing other than a thin facade. Pupils need to come to believe that adults will give them the opportunity to develop their own ideas and approaches, they need to be given the space to try things and sometimes even to make mistakes and this is not easy for adults or pupils.

Cook-Sather (2002) shared this view, believing that for children's views to be authorized, they needed to be given the space to express their views, in places where their views will be acknowledged and this required a new approach – as existing formats would not suffice (ibid, p4, p12). In order to hear pupils, adults have to listen and educational structures need to change in such a way as to invite and include pupil input into the reform process. Clearly, this view of educational reform is some way from where most schools are currently and although this may be where we wish to arrive, it is unlikely that it will be a swift journey. MacBeath et. al. (2008) found in their study:

“The development of a culture of participation takes time and has to be addressed as a long-term capacity-building process.” (ibid, p31)

and this may support the view that an incremental approach to the development of pupil voice may be helpful, such as that outlined by Bragg (2007, pp511-513). She outlined the development of pupil voice by Alison Peacock at her school over a three year period where the pupils moved from tackling the more general issue of the school playground towards having an input into teaching and learning and the curriculum, issues which are seen by many as being more challenging to staff (see Robinson and Fielding (2007, p6); MacBeath et. al. (2008, p49)). Peacock (2005) herself provides a brief account of the journey made by her new school as it moved from a judgement of 'special measures' to one which had practice described as 'inspirational' through the development of pupil voice within

“an environment of discovery, team work and trust.” (ibid, p94)

To conclude, if pupils can learn to express their views sensibly and with an understanding that not all suggestions can or will be adopted, and if teachers can learn to listen and take account of pupils' views over general school issues, a climate of pedagogical consultation, which is vital if real consultation is to occur

(MacBeath et. al. (2008, p49)), should have much more chance of success. Nevertheless, although the development of pupil voice can be time-consuming (Rudduck and McIntyre (2007, p9)) it can certainly be worth the effort as it has the potential to increase motivation and performance. This view is supported by Robinson and Fielding (2007) who found that:

“Where time and space is made available in schools for pupils’ voices to be heard on issues that affect their learning, teachers can gain insights into pupils’ perceptions of teaching which helps, and teaching which hinders, pupils’ learning.” (ibid, p10)

as well as MacBeath et. al. (2008, p30) who clearly stated there are no quick fixes. Moreover, there is a recognition amongst some researchers (e.g. Arnot et. al. (2004, p89)) that in the current performance driven climate, where pressure of time often results in a curriculum more focussed on task completion rather than understanding (Robinson and Fielding (2007, p6)), those willing to free up the time necessary to properly develop pupil voice will require a degree of courage. It may be argued that the more evidence there is to support the belief that the development of pupil voice can enhance the school experience for both pupils and staff, the more likely it will be that a growing number of schools will indeed find the courage to embark on this journey. It is hope that this work may make some small contribution towards this.

#### iv. Pupils as Researchers

One method of involving pupils in their school experience which seems to have gained increased popularity in recent years is that of developing groups of *Pupils* or *Students as Researchers* (PARs or STARs). Raymond (2001) outlines in the four stages set out above how the school in which she worked moved from simply

Figure 3: Stages of Development - Students as Researchers

<b>DATA</b>	<b>DISCUSSION</b>	<b>DIALOGUE</b> (Teacher led)	<b>SIGNIFICANT VOICE</b> (Student led)
Students as <b>Data Source</b>	Students as <b>Active Respondents</b>	Students as <b>Co-researchers</b>	Students as <b>Researchers</b>

(from Raymond (2001) p58)

asking questions of students, through involving them in the design stage of research activities, to students investigating areas of interest which they have identified themselves. In this way pupils are able to become more involved and help provide the school with more relevant and productive information.

Raymond offers the above as one possible model which may be helpful to those wishing to develop Students as Researchers and she makes the point, often noted by other researchers into pupil voice, that “*starting small is fundamental*” (ibid, p58). This is particularly relevant when developing student research work as it is quite a complex area, involving many skills including teaching pupils how to:

- develop some basic research skills such as survey, questionnaire and interview techniques
- select from the different techniques
- carry out techniques fairly and without bias
- word questions appropriately
- interpret and present results and
- how to select a suitable research topic.

As with most pupil voice activities, this development requires a good deal of time and commitment. As pupils may well have limited experience of completing surveys or filling in questionnaires themselves, it can take many weeks to simply introduce the various formats to pupils before they can even begin to determine what methods they may wish to use to collect data when they have selected a research topic they are interested in. Whilst this may seem quite an involved approach, there are some excellent materials available to support schools as they develop PARs in order to ensure pupils gain the most from the experience - see for example Fielding and Bragg (2003); Kellett (2005); MacBeath et. al. (2003). Raymond (2001, p61) noted there were many benefits to be gained from the development of Students as Researchers and found that it had led to significant change in the way staff and pupils worked together, ultimately impacting positively in teaching and learning within the school.

Reports of Student Research projects leading to school improvement are not uncommon, for example Naylor and Worrall (2004) describe how a SARs project led to an overhaul of their KS3 PHSE curriculum. They too listed the skills



developed by those pupils who participated, stating that these also impacted positively on classroom learning. Students felt valued, became more confident, acquired new skills and helped develop a curriculum more relevant to their needs, whilst teachers had understood the important role pupils can play in shaping their learning whilst they themselves were supported in the development of a curriculum relevant to the needs and interests of their pupils, leading to improvements in teaching and learning. In his study, Wahiduzzaman (2008) explored the results of student-led research into classroom challenges and attitudes. The Students as Researchers were not only taught how to collect and analyse data, they were also trained how to observe lessons and provide feedback to teachers. Although staff initially experienced a degree of apprehension, they reported that they were impressed by professionalism of the Students as Researchers and that their feedback had enabled them to improve their own practice. As a result of this research project, a three-year action plan was drawn up by the students and the strategies suggested by the students are being implemented by teaching staff to help raise the level of challenge within classes. It is clear that students and teachers benefited from involvement in both these projects, with both offering the potential to raise standards and improve attainment.

In Naylor and Worrall's study, students were expected to carry out most of their research activities outside lesson time (2004, p2) and this was a feature common to many projects. For example, Oldfather (1995) reported that in her work with student researchers:

“The students have had tough decisions about whether to give up other activities for our research meetings.” (ibid, p134)

The participants in her study found that, for the most part, the sacrifice was worth the effort, commenting that the project had made them “*feel we were worth something*” (p135). However, participants also stated that they felt frustrated when they *weren't* listened to with the result that Oldfather saw this as one of the main findings from her research – that of the need for student researchers to be heard with respect and she called this ‘*honored voice*’. In brief, she meant that the views expressed by the students were listened to with respect, regardless of whether their wishes were carried out and this is especially important when students are giving up so much of their own time to help improve schools.

Many researchers looking into the development of SARs have found that not only do pupils gain much from the experience, adults too can benefit as it opens up a whole new perspective that can provide positive support to both pupils and adults (Rogers & Frost (2006)). From her research with a small group in Oxfordshire, Kellett (2003) reported that the pupils felt:

“their research uncovered data that might not have been possible for adults to obtain, they argued that being party to playground subculture and being on the same wavelength as their peers enabled them to design studies that better accessed the child perspective.” (ibid, p13)

Crane (2001) reported from her involvement in a Students As Researchers project that students can and should become an essential part of the school’s own self evaluation. Her findings indicated that not only did the organisation benefit from the group, but the individuals involved in that project also benefited, not least because it encouraged participants to share and learn from each others’ viewpoints, thus avoiding the pitfalls of ‘tunnel-vision’.

The above review of Students as Researchers projects clearly indicates that students have a great deal to offer to schools – both in terms of improving their own experience of school and in contributing to the overall self-evaluation of schools to improve the school experience for others. Whilst there are many benefits to be gained, for this to happen students’ views need to be taken seriously and be treated with respect with adults providing appropriate levels of support to ensure projects can be properly completed. In this way both adults and students can benefit greatly.

#### **v. Curriculum, Learning and Improvement**

Rudduck et. al. (1996) stated in the opening chapter of their work that:

“what pupils say about teaching, learning and schooling is not only worth listening to, but provides an important – perhaps the most important - foundation for thinking about ways of improving schools.” (ibid, p1)

This arguably opens a new perspective into school improvement, one which requires adults to understand that pupils hold valid views about their school

experience and one of the challenges faced by many schools when developing pupil voice has been how to invite and include pupils' views on teaching and learning in a way that doesn't threaten or undermine staff. As Rudduck and McIntyre (2007) noted,

“Compared with participation, consulting pupils about teaching and learning is altogether more risky and difficult to manage: its capacity for destabilising habitual ways of behaving and familiar patterns of expectation – about power issues in teacher-pupil relationships... is obvious.” (ibid, p9)

for whilst teachers may be ideally placed to support the development of pupil voice, to assume this would not be problematic would be to ignore the power struggle that can exist in some schools and classrooms, where staff may sometimes have to wrestle to regain control of their pupils. In addition, the issue is further complicated as it may seem to some teachers that pupils already have too much control, for example dictating the pace of teaching through their behaviour in lessons, whilst pupils may hold exactly the opposite view – that teachers control too much of what occurs in a lesson through their verbal input and don't give consideration to the views of the pupils. Moreover, proponents of pupil voice may argue that the challenging behaviour of some pupils may be because they feel they are forced into a submissive role and that the only way to break out of this is through subtle, or indeed not so subtle, acts of rebellion. Many researchers in this area offer evidence to support the view that the development of pupil voice activities can actually improve behaviour and learning in the classroom, see for example Rudduck and McIntyre (2007), Arnot et. al. (2004), Flutter and Rudduck (2004) and Fielding and Bragg (2003).

Bergmark and Kostenius (2009) outline two different projects which involved pupil participation in the school improvement process, both producing excellent results. Their projects included the involvement of pupils in developing the means of data creation (through drawings and writing) and in the analysis of findings (through group discussion and reflection). Bergmark and Kostenius concluded that not only had the pupils played a valuable role in the research process, thus aiding school improvement, their participation had also enabled them to 'develop themselves' (ibid, p254). Their experiences have been very positive, but they have recognised

the importance of exercising a degree of rigour – pupils need to take time to reflect and consider on events, just as adults must do when involved in research activities. For this reason, they do not advocate that pupils work alone, rather they support the view that staff work with students on school improvement issues, with everyone aiming for the same outcome.

In their work on ‘personalised learning and pupil voice’ Rudduck et. al. (2006) noted that finding out what students thought was key to enabling the schools to identify ways in which they could improve. They reported that:

“Students helped sharpen the focus of the schools’ approaches and were able to offer insights and perspectives that broadened and enriched teachers’ understanding of the issues. In several cases students also took responsibility for aspects of the research and development themselves.....they collated and analysed the data they had gathered and presented reports to the senior management team or to heads of department.” (ibid, p14)

This project, which involved 8 secondary schools, concluded that adopting an approach to personalised learning encouraged teachers to review their practice and focus more on the experience and point of view of the students. In addition, pupil voice was found to be an essential component as it helped students to feel more involved whilst also supporting schools in identifying issues for school improvement which recognised the pupils’ concerns and perspectives. Schools were then able to act on these, enhancing the experience for all involved. However, there are two points that should be made. Firstly, the project had the benefit of two external professional researchers who could offer advice, guidance and training to the schools which contributed to this success and secondly, appropriate time and attention was given to this development, allowing staff and students to develop and apply new skills, and to adjust to their new roles. Although this process was not easy, there were valuable benefits for all involved.

Another study examining the way in which teachers can learn from pupils was carried out by McIntyre et. al. (2005), who worked with 6 teachers from 3 secondary schools, and some Year 8 pupils over a period of a year. Their research was carried out in three separate stages, with the third stage taking place

after a 6 month gap in order to determine its sustainability. Findings indicated that pupils were able to offer helpful and constructive feedback and engaged with staff in a considerate and respectful manner, whilst teachers tended to agree with what the pupils had to say and found that incorporating suggestions was not particularly difficult. Where teachers did experience difficulties was in engaging with the more 'hard to reach' pupils who were less forthcoming, either from choice or from a lack of confidence or ability to articulate what they felt.

Attard (2008) carried out a project at her school to increase pupil participation into their own learning. By adopting and developing a range of strategies including Philosophy for Children, co-researchers, peer mentors and pupil input into the curriculum, the school gradually changed their practice. She stated that whilst teachers were willing participants, the process was not without pain and that:

“There were inevitably tensions and a sense of loss of control in the initial stages. Because it was important that pupil voice should not be seen as tokenistic it meant accepting that messages from children might be uncomfortable.”  
(Attard (2008) p3)

However, the work resulted in a real partnership evolving between staff and pupils which resulted in increased motivation in pupils, a more flexible approach to teaching and learning for the teachers and a more enriched experience for all involved.

As Attard indicated, it is easier to hear the voices of those who are saying the things we readily understand or want to hear and this is supported by Bragg (2001, p73), a deeper level of challenge occurs when staff encounter the unexpected, for example pupil comments which are less agreeable, and which sometimes demand that staff take a new approach. Despite the difficulties this may present, Bragg believed that it was these 'anomalous' voices from which we may learn the most. This was a view shared by Reay (2006) who, in her study into what different groups of pupils could tell teachers about their learning experience, found that:

“pupil consultation can be painfully revealing, generating information that is both difficult for teachers to hear and do anything about. Yet.....it can

help teachers to understand how teaching and learning is experienced for pupils whose voices are not normally heard.” (ibid, p179)

This is really important as to only listen to the most agreeable, or even the most articulate voices, would be to exclude the views of pupils who are all too often excluded (Noyes (2005)). Clearly, to do so would be to ignore Article 12 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child which stated that pupils - all pupils - should have a right to have a say in the things which concerned them, including their school experience (UN Convention, 1989). For as Duffield et. al (2000) noted:

“Fostering dialogue at the classroom level, enabling the pupil’s voice to be heard and valued, has the potential not only to improve relationships but to enhance the learning and achievement” (ibid, p272)

and it should be remembered that this applies to all pupils, regardless of ability, attitude or social disposition – indeed those pupils who can be the hardest to reach may often be the ones who have most to gain from the experience. Rudduck and Fielding (2006) noted,

“The development of student participation in schools depends on teachers being prepared to ‘see’ young people differently.” (ibid, p225)

and perhaps there is no group for which this holds more truth than those pupils who are the most difficult to engage. This then places responsibility on the adults to make the effort required – the potential benefits are surely worth that effort.

Arnot et. al. (2004) also consider the issue of power in their work which explored the ways in which teachers responded to pupil feedback and used this to adapt their practice. They found that despite some initial concerns, when pupils were given the opportunity to have an input into their learning, they did so sensibly and without taking advantage. However, it is worth noting that the teachers taking part in Arnot’s project were working within a supportive environment rather than in isolation.

In their work, McIntyre et. al. (2005) found that when pupils are consulted about teaching and learning there occurs a shift in the balance of power (ibid, p6) and by providing training for pupils on how best to develop the necessary skills and

attitudes can help ensure that maximum benefit is obtained. Teachers too would benefit from a degree of support here and this should not be undermined, as many teachers will need to change what, for some, may be long-held traits and an approach to teaching which meant they were very much in control, deciding what is taught, when. MacBeath et. al. (2008, p34) found that schools needed to avoid placing more importance on the views of pupils than staff as to do so could cause resentment. Their investigation into pupil input into teaching and learning threw up two issues – firstly some pupils were concerned that teachers would dismiss any negative feedback and possibly take it out on the pupil giving it. Secondly, teachers were concerned that pupil feedback would not take account of the context of the lesson. These concerns were not uncommon, some teachers were concerned with what they saw as a challenge to their professionalism. Robinson and Fielding (2007) noted that when significant changes related to pupil voice are implemented within primary schools:

“consideration must also be given to staff apprehension about issues of control and of the perception by some that the basis of their professionalism is being eroded, not redefined.” (ibid, p6)

Wahiduzzaman (2008) found that the teachers taking part in his study certainly felt more positive towards pupil input following their involvement in the student-led research at his school, despite some reservations at the start of the project, with one teacher commenting:

“I was intimidated at first, however after contemplation I was intrigued and excited to find out how the students would evaluate my performance... I enjoyed the collaborative work with the students...I have learnt new effective strategies to raise girls’ achievement.” (ibid, p2)

Whilst another commented that despite mixed feelings initially, she enjoyed working with the students and their feedback had helped her own professional development. Whilst these teachers expressed initial reservations, both were very positive following involvement in the student-led research, lending support to the view expressed by Rudduck and McIntyre (2007, p120) who found that even when teachers felt positively towards pupil consultation into teaching and learning, they only really understood the benefits after they had experienced it themselves.

When Jackson (2007) listed six reasons why he thought pupil participation made sense, many of which are covered elsewhere, he stated succinctly the belief that:

“if students are not allowed to change what they do, then we will never transform learning.” (ibid, p1)

suggesting that real transformation in education will only come about when pupils have more input into what happens. Flutter and Rudduck (2004) shared this belief, noting that pupil voice can be transformational in both changing the role of pupils within schools and in initiating change within the school structure. Robinson (2010) noted that when teachers consult learners,

“a more collaborative relationship... tends to develop, the outcome of which is likely to lead to improvements in the quality of pupil learning. Thus, the better you understand learners and their learning, the more effective your teaching and their learning will be.” (ibid, p335)

perhaps suggesting that consultation is a developmental process, whereby the deeper the level of engagement, the greater the potential benefits – a view I hope to test by the end of my research.

## **vi. Potential Problems and Pitfalls**

The development of pupil voice clearly brings a number of benefits to both staff and pupils, many of which have already been explored. It can also make a worthwhile, some might say necessary, contribution to school improvement. However, its implementation is not without its challenges and those hoping to embark on this journey should be aware of these. Three of these have already been covered above:

- consideration needs to be given to the views of staff [see ‘Listening to Pupils’ and the views of Nieto (1994), Lincoln (1995) and Noyes (2005)]
- the issue of power [see ‘Curriculum, Learning and Improvement’ and the views of Rudduck and McIntyre (2007), Arnot et. al. (2004), Rudduck and Fielding (2006) and Robinson and Fielding (2007)]
- inclusion – that consideration should be given to the views of all pupils, not just the most articulate or most dominant [see Reay (2006), Noyes (2005) and Rudduck and Fielding (2006)]



Another issue already touched on is that pupil voice requires commitment in terms of time, especially when a school is trying to build up sustainability. Rudduck and Flutter (2004) put this succinctly when they said:

“it takes time and patient commitment to build open and dependable structures within schools.” (ibid, p104)

However commitment of time extends to pupils as well as staff, bringing further responsibilities towards staff, for when pupils invest time, energy and enthusiasm in a venture they become filled with expectation which can quickly evaporate if they find there is no follow-through. As Bennett Woodhouse (2003) put it:

“Children bring tremendous commitment and trust to the process, and are at risk of alienation and disillusion if adults fail to respond to their efforts.” (ibid, p759)

This puts a degree of responsibility onto those adults who engage with pupil voice, as children who have had their expectations falsely raised will be less inclined to engage with adults a second time. In addition, trust, once lost is hard to regain and instead of pupils emerging enhanced by their experiences they will feel in some way diminished. Fielding (2001, p107) discusses the issue of follow-through too, making the point that just because an idea is suggested by pupils does not mean that it is accepted or agreed – however adults do have the responsibility to respect the views presented, usually in some public way so that pupils feel their efforts have at least been recognised – an issue already explored by Oldfather (1995, p135) and Cook-Sather (2002, p12). This issue of trust is picked up by O’Rourke (2001) who believes it characterises a relationship whereby teachers engage meaningfully with learners to create “*a truly empowering relationship*” (ibid, p10).

Bennett Woodhouse (2003) identified two other potential dangers in pupil involvement. Firstly, she raised the concern that there was a danger that adults working with pupils may ‘brainwash’ them into sharing their point of view or worse, promoting the adult point of view rather than supporting pupils to determine their own views on an issue. It may well be difficult to ensure that pupils are developing their own views, particularly when an adult is working with a group on an aspect they feel passionate about themselves. To avoid this requires both awareness and integrity on behalf of those adults involved – awareness that they may be, perhaps

unintentionally, forcing their own opinions on young people and the integrity to act in such a way that avoids this.

Lastly Bennett Woodhouse pointed out that the honesty of some children, which can sometimes appear rather brutal, can have the affect of turning adults away from consultation and prevent some projects from 'getting off the ground'. Pupils need to learn the language of participation in the same way as adults need to be aware that there are more positive ways of supporting pupils in putting across their views than simply telling them their choice of words or point of view is 'unacceptable'. For example, when developing research skills with pupils, staff can teach pupils ways in which they can rephrase their questions in ways which will encourage more responses. Cruddas (2001) acknowledged this issue too, stating that ideas expressed by some young people can make adults feel 'uncomfortable or threatened'. She placed responsibility on the adults to:

“analyse and understand these feelings when they are evoked and still operate from the right of young person to a voice.” (ibid, p63)

Whilst the development of pupil voice can present difficulties at times for both staff and students, it would be reasonable to expect that adults should be capable of adopting a mature approach, demonstrating a degree of understanding in what can be challenging circumstances for everyone. The evidence available seems to suggest that the effort is certainly worth the benefits such development can yield.

## **vii. Conclusions**

Whilst there is little evidence to indicate that the development of pupil voice has had a negative impact on either individuals or the school community as a whole, the research covered has generally agreed on the following points:

- The development of pupil voice takes time and cannot be rushed
- When a school commits to pupil voice, there must be 'follow-through' or there is a grave danger of disillusionment, or even worse, a feeling of mistrust developing within the school
- Staff and students may both need support and encouragement to engage fully with the development of pupil voice
- Pupils have a lot to offer and their input can have a significant impact on school improvement

- To maximise the potential of pupil voice adults involved must also feel valued and that their views and input are also important.

### **c. School Improvement**

On setting out to develop pupil voice within my own school I felt a degree of responsibility to ensure that the project would have a good chance of success – or at the very least not fail or suffer due to poor preparation and management within the school. I hoped at the outset that the development of pupil voice may support school improvement and in order to prepare appropriately for this, as well as reviewing current thinking on pupil voice and considering the external climate, I also gave some consideration to relevant literature relating to school improvement.

As mentioned in the previous chapter, much of the change in education over the last twenty years or so has been driven by the desire to improve standards, giving rise to a considerable body of work in the area of school improvement (see Fullan (1992, 2004), MacBeath (2004), Sergiovanni (1992), Stoll and Fink (1996) etc.). Within this field there are differing definitions as to what constitutes school improvement, including this one offered by Hopkins et. al. (1994) which states that:

“..school improvement is about raising student achievement through focusing on the teacher-learning process and the conditions which support it.”  
(ibid, p3)

This definition focuses on two specific elements: how teachers teach and pupils learn, and the climate within which this happens. Hopkins et. al. go on to talk about the school’s capacity to adapt to changing circumstances whilst still providing high quality education and as they wrote this nearly twenty years ago, this would seem quite far-sighted of them given the rate of change in education since.

Stoll and Fink (1996) outlined their view of school improvement, which covered those listed above by Hopkins but which also included many more elements such as the school’s ability to take charge, set clear strategies to achieve goals, its ability to monitor accurately and its ability to maintain momentum (1996, p43). As an experienced head teacher, I feel Stoll and Fink’s view of school improvement is

realistic, particularly as it gives a sense of the school's need to keep so many balls in the air at the same time through strong leadership and a clear sense of direction, whilst acknowledging the valuable role school culture plays. Recognising the significance of culture is important, for as MacBeath (1999) says:

“Most people in the school-improvement business take school culture as a necessary starting point for development and change.” (ibid, p38)

There are many views as to what constitutes 'school culture' see for example, MacBeath and McGlynn (2002, p6 and p70), Stoll et. al. (2001, p181), Louis (2004, p75) and Fink (2006, p15) all of which, whilst taking slightly different interpretations, acknowledge the intangibility of culture. For me, the best description is the one offered by Stoll (2004) when she says quite simply:

“Culture is the 'glue' that holds everyone together” (ibid, p96)

as it seems to express the way culture 'oozes' through an organisation, and when positive, helps to keep everything going, even when times are challenging.

One of the aims of this research was to determine whether the development of pupil voice could move the school from a performance driven culture to a pupil-centred learning culture. Fink (2006) talks about a set of values: trust, respect, optimism and intentionality which, when they come together, can help create a

“... shared and evolving vision of a *learning-centred* school.” (ibid p45)

He talks persuasively of how the elements of trust and respect seemed to be missing from the external drive, led by organisations such as Ofsted, to improve standards in schools, with schools and staff named and blamed when they fall short (ibid, p46, 47). He suggests that improvement may be limited without trust and respect and this is a view shared by Klein (2003) who believes that standards and the concept of respect are 'tightly interwoven' (ibid, p3). Added to this, Fink believes that a supportive working environment (2006 pp46 – 49) is necessary and it would indeed seem sensible to suggest that when pupils feel valued, respected and work within a climate of support they will strive harder and ultimately achieve more. Fullan (2004) also talks about the need to develop 'a culture of sharing', stating that:

“People do not voluntarily share knowledge unless the culture favors exchange.” (ibid, p118)

All of the above researchers note the importance of having the right conditions in place, the right *culture*, to enable school improvement to take place, with many noting the importance of trust and a need for a focus on the teaching/learning experience. In addition, as noted by Scott (1999, p93) one of the skills of effective leaders is their ability to “*shape culture*” in order to support change.

Soo Hoo (1993) considers that schools should not ignore the valuable input pupils can have into school improvement. When a culture of trust between pupils and adults is achieved, pupils can begin to play a valuable role and she believes that to ignore the insight and perspectives pupils can bring to schools is to:

“overlook the treasure in our very own backyards, the pupils.” (ibid, p389)

This reflects the perspective that pupil voice activities can help schools to transform learning from within (see Noyes (2005) p534) – something that can be assisted by a shift in focus from teaching to learning. For as Ekholm (2004) has pointed out:

“Schools have been designed to be places where teaching is at a premium, but *teaching* can eat into a student’s time for important *learning*.” (ibid, p108)

suggesting that the more teachers lecture to pupils the less time there is for children to participate in the learning process, perhaps sharing the view of Morgan and Saxton (1991) who state:

“effective teaching depends upon recognizing that effective *learning* takes place when the students are active participants in ‘what’s going on’.” (ibid, p7)

Their view places importance in pupils being active participants in the learning process, and throughout this research I continually refer to teaching and learning separately, and distinguish them as follows: teaching is an activity involving not only instruction but also discussion, questioning and encouraging children to become motivated and participate in the process, whilst learning is predominantly

what the pupils engage in through a variety of activities which include not only listening, but also discussing, thinking, questioning and participating.

#### **d. Conclusions**

The development of pupil voice can help schools to grow and develop in a variety of ways, assisting them to adapt their approach not only to resource decisions but also to decisions affecting teaching, learning and the curriculum. It can bring potential benefits to both pupils and staff: pupils may feel empowered to take more of an active role in their own education, whilst developing a range of skills including the ability to survey, evaluate and present effectively; whereas staff may engage more fully with pupils, taking account of their views, thus learning to adapt both their teaching and the curriculum to meet the needs of those pupils they teach. Some research studies have indicated that teachers feel this engagement has helped them to develop a more appropriate curriculum, to grow as professionals and subsequently improved the quality of their teaching. This is supported by a recent study carried out by Dougill et al. (2011, p5) which noted that a school's ability to not only listen to but also act upon the views of the pupils was a key indicator of school effectiveness.

Whilst pupil voice is one aspect that can help contribute to school improvement, it should not be regarded as the only method nor viewed in isolation, as indicated by MacBeath and Mortimore (2001, p20). However, nor should its usefulness be ignored and whilst there is a growing body of evidence outlining both the benefits and challenges brought about through the development of pupil voice in schools, there is a lack of research outlining in detail the journey taken by a school as it moves from a position of taking little account of pupils' views to one where pupil voice is fully embedded. This study aims to address this and offers an insight into the progressive steps one school took to embrace pupil voice in such a way that brought improvements to the school for all concerned, pupils and staff, whilst raising expectations as to the skills and attributes pupils had to offer to parents and the wider community.

## **CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY**

### **a. Purpose**

This research examines the journey taken by a one-form entry primary school in the North East of England as it has moved from a results-driven organisation where decisions were made almost exclusively by staff to a community where pupils are more fully involved in most aspects of school life, including their own learning. The school is smaller than average with approximately 170 pupils, 91% of which are white British. Approximately 8% speak English as an additional language and mobility within the school is slightly higher than the national average. The proportion of pupils with Special Educational Needs is average, although the percentage of those with statements is higher. The number of pupils eligible for Free School Meals is low and in many families both parents work. For this reason the school offers before and after school care each day from 7.45am until 6pm. This is run by a private, non-profit making company which was set up by four Governors of the school.

At the outset it is important to note that this journey is in no way complete, however what the study offers is an honest analysis of the steps taken which have led to subsequent changes.

### **b. Action Research**

Lomax (2002) gives a clear definition of action research which she has adapted from Carr and Kemmis (1986), saying it is the:

“self-reflective, self-critical and critical enquiry undertaken by professionals to improve the rationality and justice of their own practices, their understanding of these practices and the wider contexts of practice.”

(2002) p122)

As with most research methods, action research can be further categorised, as by Zeichner (2001) who identifies five major ‘traditions’ of action research in

education, of which the 'British teacher-as-researcher' most accurately describes the activity I am engaged with in the writing of this thesis. He claims that this:

"teacher-as-researcher movement evolved....from the reform work of British teachers and the support provided by several academics like Lawrence Stenhouse and John Elliott" (2001, p273)

There are numerous examples of the positive impact action research has had on education since its emergence in the 1960s – for example, Stenhouse, Elliott and Ruddick acknowledged that it was the numerous initiatives of teacher-researchers into curriculum reform that ultimately led to a more relevant curriculum for students (Zeichner in Reason and Bradbury (2001) p275). Kemmis (1993) claims that Lewin, whom he believed to have been responsible for creating the phrase 'action research' in the 1940s, considered action research to be:

"essential for the progress of 'basic social research.' "

(see Hammersley (1993) p179)

Kemmis goes on to review the progress of action research over the next few decades until the late 1980s where he sees it as moving from a 'technical' approach towards an approach owned more by practitioners – which he describes as 'emancipatory'.

Moving into the 1990s, there is evidence to support the view that the 'teacher-as-researcher' is alive and well, having been highlighted and actively promoted by the General Teaching Council through their creation of the 'Teacher Learner Academy' (TLA). The establishment of this organisation represented a serious investment of resources, indicating the value the Teaching Council places on this as a method of further developing teachers. The TLA provides accreditation at one of four stages for teachers who submit a reflective account of some action research they have undertaken and its website says its purpose is to help:

"schools and teachers to focus on professional learning that is practice-based, provides national recognition and has a sustained impact in the classroom."

(TLA (2010) homepage)

The TLA has provided a clear structure to support teachers as they write up accounts of their practice, thus encouraging many more teachers to become active



researchers than might have otherwise been the case. In addition, the four different stages of the TLA allows practitioners to move from a basic account of a simple piece of research to a more detailed account of a large-scale work which has been published and shared with other educationalists. The whole process recognises the important role action research plays in developing a deeper understanding about the teaching/learning process and how this knowledge can lead to further improvements – thus satisfying Lomax’s definition. In addition, it places the focus of attention firmly where the action happens – in the classroom:

“TLA projects are rooted in classroom practice. They help you make practical, tangible changes that benefit your pupils directly.”

(TLA (2008), p7)

Arguably, it is the process of formally writing up their work which raises the work of teachers into the realms of action research (see McNiff and Whitehead (2005) p2) but of course this account must include some reflective activity (see Lomax (2002) p122, (Payne & Payne (2004) p10, McNiff & Whitehead (2005) p4) and this process requires practitioners to progress from simply describing their practice to theorising about practice. It is worth noting that although the present Government has announced its intention to disband the GTC, the TLA will remain, taken over by a consortium led by the Cathedrals Group of Universities and University Colleges, with a re-launch planned for Autumn 2011.

The current importance of the ‘practitioner perspective’ and ‘evidence informed practice’ in 21<sup>st</sup> century education was further established by the creation of the National Teacher Research Panel in 1999. This organisation was initially funded by the General Teaching Council (GTC), the National College of School Leadership (NCSL), the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) and the Learning and Skills Improvement Service (LSIS) – in other words, some of the major figures in British Education in early 21<sup>st</sup> century and so it is worth noting its own description and purpose:

“The National Teacher Research Panel is an independent group of practising teachers and tutors who work to:

- ensure that all research in education takes account of the practitioner perspective;

- ensure a higher profile for research and evidence informed practice in government, academic and practitioner communities; and
- increase the number of teachers and tutors engaged in and with the full spectrum of research activity.” (NTRP homepage, 2009)

Given the current focus on teacher-as-researcher, I feel that this choice of method for conducting my research into pupil voice is not only appropriate but also timely.

### **c. Case Study**

Payne and Payne (2004) state that:

“a case study is a very detailed research enquiry into a single example (of a social process, organisation or collectivity) seen as a social unit in its own right and as a holistic entity.” (p.31)

and whilst this highlights the focus of a case study on the single case, I feel the description offered by Yin (2003a) takes us further as he encourages us to consider the area under investigation within its context when he states that the case study is an enquiry which:

- “Investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when
- The boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident” (ibid, p13)

This case study examines the development of pupil voice within a one-form entry primary school and it offers its findings as a contribution to the body of knowledge surrounding pupil voice. The ‘case study’ approach to Action Research can be further sub-divided, as by Yin (1991) who identified three different approaches: ‘the critical case study’, ‘the revelatory case study’ and the one used within this research – the ‘unique case study’. Further development in this area by Yin (2003a) led to the development both single-case and multiple-case designs.

When considering the best approach for my research I quickly identified that given my circumstances and my area of interest, a single-case study would be most appropriate, representing a *unique* case (2003a p40). However, in selecting such an approach it was important to decide whether the organisation itself was suitable

to be the basis of such research and here consideration needed to be given to the general attitudes to change prevalent within the school. For example, if an organisation has a history of resentment or of negative attitudes to change regardless of what that change is, then it would be difficult to offer an accurate analysis of the outcomes of that change. Relating this to my study within school, I felt that as staff had proved to be reasonably open to new ideas and approaches (as long as there was some evidence to support that these approaches have had a positive impact elsewhere) then a single-case approach examining the unique case of the development of pupil voice would be appropriate.

A careful consideration of Yin's work in this area gave me pause for thought: whilst I felt it was important for me to actively support the development of pupil voice within school, his views made me consider that to try to promote pupil voice to the virtual exclusion of other aspects within school would not only be unrealistic, I would be in danger of creating a case which other schools would find difficult, if not impossible to replicate in the fast-moving and ever-changing world that is education. In addition, as head teacher of the organisation it is important to me that the changes that take place do so due to a sense of ownership of staff, pupils and the whole community, not just as a result of my pushing this initiative through at the expense of other issues. Thus it should be noted that the development of pupil voice described within this research account took place as one of a number of initiatives occurring simultaneously within the school over the 3-year research period. As will be clear to anyone working within education during the last decade, to do otherwise i.e. to conduct only one change over 3 years, would be impossible!

#### **d. Qualitative Research**

This study was set within an interpretative framework and is based heavily on the collection of qualitative research which I gathered over a three-year period. Some quantitative data was also collected and this is analysed too.

Denzin and Lincoln (2008) state that

'Qualitative researchers stress the socially constructed nature of reality, the intimate relationship between the researcher and what is studied, and the situational constraints that shape enquiry.... They seek answers to

questions that stress *how* social experience is created and given meaning.’ (ibid, p14)

Thus stating up front that in qualitative research the researcher by the very nature of their activity is closely involved in the process they are studying. This ‘intimate relationship’ may be seen as problematic - especially by advocates of more quantitative approaches – as it might suggest it would be difficult for researchers to make objective judgements. However, there remain strong arguments for undertaking qualitative research for example Mason (2002) states that qualitative researching

‘has an unrivalled capacity to constitute compelling arguments about *how things work in particular contexts*’ (ibid, p1)

- a view presented previously by Stenhouse (in Rudduck & Hopkins (1985)). Hammersley (1993) presents four arguments in favour of the participant researcher, for which he then offers counter-arguments (pp218 – 219), finally concluding that the positions of both teachers-as-researchers and independent researchers have advantages and disadvantages, inferring that what is really important is that the method selected is fit for purpose.

The research I am engaged in has required me to examine the changing views of teachers and the shift in focus and activities of both teachers and pupils *within the context* of our school - to have attempted otherwise would have been meaningless. This would suggest that my choice of approach was appropriate as it meets the purpose set out for the study as outlined above.

Many writers of teacher-research stress the need for the teacher to engage in a high degree of self-reflection (i.e. Hammersley (1993), Stenhouse (1979), Stringer (2008)). Mason calls this *active reflexivity*” (2002, p7) which requires the researcher to constantly review their actions, based on the premise that they cannot remain neutral or detached from the area under study. This is even more crucial when the researcher has a major role within the organisation – as I do as head teacher. Throughout the research period I tried to encourage staff to be open about their attitudes and responses. However I am also aware that there was an element of staff trying to please me as the drive towards developing pupil voice

activities within school had originally come from me as head teacher and this brings us to the issues of validity and reliability.

## **e. Reliability and Validity**

### **i. Reliability**

Reliability is often seen as the ‘degree of consistency’ with which something will occur – either the same result found by different observers or the same result found by the same observer on different occasions (see Hammersley (1992) p67). Silverman discusses the problems associated with reliability when considering qualitative research and turns to the work of Clive Seale who points to ‘low-inference descriptors’ (see Silverman (2001) pp226-227). In short, this involves the qualitative researcher recording events as accurately as possible, such as verbatim accounts of interviews, whilst avoiding more general reconstructions which simply give the gist of what has been said. Silverman further suggests that we can satisfy low-inference descriptors by:

- “ • tape-recording all face-to-face interviews
- carefully transcribing these tapes.....
- presenting long extracts of data in your research report – including the question that provoked any answer.” (Silverman (2001) p230)

This approach should minimise researcher bias and for this reason I recorded all interviews with staff, transcribing these soon after the interviews took place, and have included the transcripts as appendices (see Appendix 3 and Appendix 4).

### **ii. Validity**

Any research method requires that the researcher establishes validity for the study. Hammersley’s definition, often quoted, says:

“By validity, I mean truth: interpreted as the extent to which an account accurately represents the social phenomena to which it refers.”  
(Hammersley (1990), p57)

thus implying that the truth is set within the context under investigation. This view is supported by Stringer (2008) who states that whilst looking at validity in action

research we are looking for “truths-in-context” (ibid, p47). There are various tools and ‘check lists’ put forward for assessing validity within action research (see Stringer (2008) pp 48 – 52, Lincoln & Guba (1985)), however for the purposes of this research I have chosen to look at two approaches: triangulation and respondent validation.

### **iii. Triangulation**

Triangulation involves collecting and comparing different kinds of data, both quantitative and qualitative, and different research methods (eg. questionnaires, interviews and observations) to see if they agree. During this research study, whilst I will be relying heavily on qualitative research I have also collected qualitative data through questionnaires which have been analysed.

### **iv. Respondent Validation**

Silverman (2001 pp233-236) describes ‘respondent validation’ as the process of taking your findings back to the participant and checking for their agreement. My research took place over a three year period and involved interviews (which were transcribed), questionnaires and notes. Whilst carrying out my analysis of findings, I met with each of the participants who were still employed at school to share my interpretation of their responses. Setting aside for the moment the issue that they may simply have agreed with me as their manager, I did achieve ‘respondent validation’.

## **f. Research Tools**

As the research period covered three years and involved noting changes over time, it was important to me that I captured not only the responses of participants at different points, but also the ‘mood’ or ‘depth’ of these responses. As a loan researcher, it was also vital that the approach selected was manageable – both in terms of collecting data and analysing it (see McNiff & Whitehead (2005) pp7-8, Lomax (2002) pp123-124). For these reasons I decided to interview all the participants individually at the start of the research period and at the end, recording all interviews on a small, unobtrusive micro-recorder. Participants also completed a questionnaire mid-way through the research period, with some questions requiring quantitative responses. Additional information was gathered

from pupil responses to the annual pupil questionnaires, parent responses to their annual questionnaires and comments made to me by pupils which I noted, all-be-it in a 'best fit recount' of what had been said to me. In addition, I shared the transcribed accounts of interviews with staff and had a final meeting with them individually to try to achieve some degree of 'respondent validation' as described above. These methods were selected to ensure I could achieve some degree of validity and reliability as discussed in the previous section.

### **g. Selecting the Research Topic**

I originally became interested in this area when I came across the book, "Consulting Pupils: What's in it for Schools" by Julia Flutter and Jean Rudduck (2004). At the time I had just moved to my second headship and I was looking for a way to develop the school which would impact positively on those who mattered most – the children, in a way which would not impact negatively on standards. I was aware that the school was too focussed on testing and results rather than developing the 'whole child' and I felt that what was needed was a shift in culture of the school.

At about this time I was also looking for a research project as I was becoming disillusioned with my initial choice of topic. The more I looked into pupil voice, the more I was fascinated by the possibilities – early reading and an increasing awareness of the Rights of the Child (initially through Unicef material) led me to believe that the development of this aspect within my school could lead to a change in central focus for the whole school (away from testing and back to the pupils), a shift in ethos and ultimately the possibility of raising standards as the school adapted to meet the needs and interests of the pupils. In addition, the purpose of research is to contribute to the body of knowledge.

The more I read about pupil voice, the greater my awareness became that I could find nothing significantly negative. I felt that from a research perspective, it had a good chance of making a positive impact on the school (given the body of work in favour of it) whilst at least having the advantage that if it didn't, I may be able to produce one of the first pieces of research in this area with a negative outcome!

## **h. Procedure**

### **i. Approach**

Having selected my research topic, I then set about reading about the experiences of other schools in order to help identify potential benefits as well as possible pitfalls. Nearly all of my reading at this stage was centred round primary and secondary schools in the UK and at this point, the most useful books included:

- \* Consulting Pupils: What's in it for Schools? (2004) Flutter and Rudduck
- \* Consultation in the Classroom (2004) Arnot, McIntyre, Pedder & Reay
- \* Consulting Pupils: A Toolkit for Teachers (2003) MacBeath, Demetriou, Rudduck & Myers

I noticed some common themes cropping up in the texts and this awareness enabled me to adapt a more sensitive approach to the introduction of pupil voice in school. The following steps are a brief guide to the procedure I followed with staff in school and are explored in more detail in Chapter 5. In short, prior to the start of the research period I prepared the way by:

- reading a lot about pupil voice activities in the UK
- attending the Durham Pupil Voice Conference in Autumn 2006
- participating in a 'Pupils as Researchers' (PARs) workshop in January 2007 led by Dr. Carol Robinson with a group of Y6 pupils from my school
- developing a PARs group at school during Spring/Summer 2007, demonstrating the positive impact pupils could have within the school.

During the research period I then:

- introduced the concept of pupil voice in a staff meeting
- continued to develop 'Pupils as Researchers' within school
- reorganised our approach to our School Council
- supported the PARs in presenting their findings within school
- prepared and supported the PARs as they led a workshop for teachers, head teachers and advisors at the 2008 Durham Pupil Voice Conference
- supported PARs in leading a session at the 2009 Durham Rights Respecting Conference about their recent work
- developed pupil input into school in a number of ways (Young Sports Leaders, Enterprise Work, input into policies, school newsletters etc.)



- promoted the concept of pupil voice within the whole school community
- encouraged staff to share ideas for gathering feedback from pupils into teaching and learning as part of our 'assessment for learning' focus – leading to the development of a resource bank
- encouraged staff to share ideas as we moved towards a more pupil-based topic report, as part of the development of our creative curriculum
- shared the experiences of my PARs group with the teaching community through a short feature in the GTC 'Teaching' magazine (GTC (2010b)).
- shared my findings on the impact pupil voice can have on learning in a Research Summary which I was asked to write for the National Teacher Research Panel (Whitton (2010)).

## **ii. Data Gathering**

In order to gather data and map changes along the way, I:

- interviewed staff (teaching and non-teaching) about their thoughts regarding pupil voice, taping the interviews (2007 and 2009)
- carried out Annual Pupil Questionnaires (2007, 2008 & 2009)
- carried out Annual Parent Questionnaires (2007, 2008 & 2009)
- conducted Staff Questionnaires in 2008.

Participants were provided with both Participant Consent Forms and Participant Information Sheets. Having gained consent from all participants, I ensured my conduct satisfied the guidelines provided by Durham University Ethics Committee.

## **j. Summary**

There has been much written in recent years about the place of pupil voice, and its increased prominence in schools. This thesis offers an analysis of the way the school (staff and pupils together) gradually embraced pupil voice over a 3 year period, moving from its first tentative steps where concerns over loss of control mingled with uncertainty as to what pupils could actually contribute, to a more certain footing where staff actively seek pupils' contributions into topic direction/development, feedback into teaching and learning as well as school-wide issues such as resources and equipment. It is hoped that schools wishing to develop and fully embed pupil voice in a meaningful way may find this work useful.

## CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS

This chapter primarily considers the responses various members of the school community have provided to questions surrounding pupil voice. These questions were presented in the form of either semi-structured interviews (which were recorded and then transcribed) or questionnaires. Some written comments regarding pupil voice are also included and these came from discussions around school issues and events as well as responses to more generic questions such as 'What do you like best about school'; 'what has made you feel most proud this year?', 'What will you remember most about your time at Xxxx Primary School?'. Respondents included teachers, Learning Support Assistants (LSAs), clerical staff, pupils, parents and Governors.

Additional information has been obtained from a review of the Ofsted reports for the school from May 2007, just prior to the start of the first year of the research period, and January 2010, in the final year of the research period, as well as the Key Stage 2 SATs results for Years 2007, 2008 and 2009.

### **a. Introducing the Concept of Pupil Voice**

As briefly stated in Chapter 3 (section h) I first introduced the concept of pupil voice at a staff meeting in the autumn term, 2007. The school had undergone an Ofsted inspection the previous term, resulting in an overall judgement of 'Satisfactory with Good features' and we were looking for ways to move the school forward which would improve the learning experience for the children whilst raising standards within the school. The discussion started with a range of questions such as; 'what are we trying to achieve?', 'who are the people we are trying to serve?', moving on to areas such as; 'what could we do differently?' and 'do we consider the children enough?'. It was quite clear that the staff present (all teachers) understood that if we continued to do what we'd always done, we'd continue to get the same sort of results – and this belief that change was needed was arguably fundamental to the future progress and success of the school.

Straight away staff agreed children were the central members of our school community – the reason we were all there. We began by discussing their current involvement in school, considering the times when pupils are able to speak freely, voicing their own opinions, and identifying who listens to them. Within school at this time, most classes held discussions as part of Circle Time and staff felt that pupils could offer opinions on a range of subjects. However, staff were also aware that not all pupils contributed to such discussions and that often it may be the same group of pupils who did so. Recognising this is important, as the extent to which pupils can speak and be heard is a significant factor in determining the culture of a school. As mentioned previously (p18) Fielding (2001) considers this area and sets out a number of questions such as:

- *Who* is allowed to speak?
- *To whom* are they allowed to speak?
- *What* are they allowed to speak about?
- What *language* is encouraged/allowed? (ibid, p100)
- *Who* is listening?
- *Why* are they listening?
- *How* are they listening? (ibid, p102)

Within these questions Fielding was referring to those times when pupils were able to speak freely about *any* issues that interested or concerned them, not just those raised by the school.

At the start of the research period it would be fair to say that most discussions took place within the Circle Times mentioned above and the content of these was often set by either the School Council or staff. New issues were seldom raised during Circle Time itself and the ability of pupils to simply talk about matters that interested them when *they* felt it appropriate, rather than at some pre-arranged time, was minimal, if not non-existent as staff seemed more disposed to listen to pupils during these set times. From this it is clear that the prevailing culture was one where adults controlled and set the agenda, rather than one where the needs or concerns of the pupils were paramount. However, this does not necessarily mean that the adults within school at that time did not care about the views of pupils, rather it may have been because they had not previously considered that pupils had much of significance to say and so they didn't need to demonstrate they were actively ready to listen.

I attempted to address this issue by showing staff what our pupils were capable of through the work of our 'Pupils as Researchers'. This group, which had been expertly trained as part of a pilot project in Durham, had carried out research in a highly proficient way, demonstrating to staff the level of input some pupils could have. Furthermore, this group included pupils with a range of abilities demonstrating that it was not only the bright and articulate who could make a meaningful contribution. These pupils had moved on to secondary school, but a new group were about to be trained. I then shared a range of strategies used in other schools which I had come across in my research, suggesting that we may like to develop some of these ideas over time. I felt it was important to discuss things that had worked elsewhere, discussing both positive impact and context, as this gave the ideas some degree of credibility.

I believe that my approach of raising a wide range of strategies, suggesting that we started slowly with one or two which staff might feel more comfortable with, and stressing my belief that all initiatives would take time to embed (staff were well aware that I did not believe in 'quick fixes') whilst making my commitment to pupil involvement clear and leading by example, all helped secure staff commitment to the notion of developing pupil voice within our school. Whilst one of the difficulties of participant research is the ability to demonstrate objectivity, it can provide certain advantages too. In this case, as head teacher I was able to ensure that the development of pupil voice remained central to what we were trying to achieve as a school over the three-year research period and that it was not sidelined by other initiatives. It should also be noted that at no point over the three years was pupil voice the *only* initiative we were working on – schools simply do not work in that way. However, what did become apparent was that weaving the concept of pupil voice through whatever other aspect we were focusing on within school – whether it be raising attainment, nurturing values and skills within pupils or developing our curriculum – became easier and almost seamless as time went on.

## **b. Initial Responses**

To chart the development of pupil voice it was first necessary to obtain a picture of staff perceptions at the outset of the research period and I felt that a more accurate picture could be achieved if I involved more than just the teaching staff.

Following the initial staff meeting, information regarding pupil voice strategies was shared with Learning Support Assistants and clerical staff, and so in the initial semi-structured interviews six teachers and four non-teaching staff were interviewed. Transcripts of these interviews (which took place in Autumn 2007) are given as Appendix 3, with teachers identified as T1 – T6 and non-teaching staff identified as NT1 – NT4.

Initial thoughts regarding pupil voice were based on what participants considered the advantages and disadvantages of increasing pupil involvement into school activities may be, whilst giving their thoughts regarding possible pupil input into a range of activities over the next two years. These latter activities have been separated into those which might impact directly into class teaching and the curriculum, and those which may have a more general impact. As my research progressed, it became evident that teachers viewed these two groups of activities quite differently and therefore it may be useful to be able to identify them simply. For this reason I introduced the headings ‘Classroom Input’ (teaching, learning and the curriculum) and ‘General Input’ (everything else). A summary of results is given as Table 1 below:

**Table 1: Summary of Staff Responses at Start of Research Period**

Aspect	Teacher Responses	Non-teacher Responses
<b>Possible Advantages of Pupil Voice Activities</b>	Motivation x 3 Empower children Different perspective from pupils x 2 Children more aware, better involved x 2 Improved self-esteem Improved relationships Talk more about school/impact on parents in positive way.	You get pupils' opinions to discover how they learn best. If they have input they may enjoy things more. Children need to be safe, happy and feel they're heard – they're here for most of the day.
<b>Possible Disadvantages of Pupil Voice Activities</b>	Children may want to take over school. Depends on mix of children and influence one child could have on a group x 2 Problems if a teacher does not accept this. Health & Safety constraints may make it difficult to support pupils' ideas. Depends on boundaries and how far you go. If pupils are involved in staffing appointments and their choice isn't successful. Can cause arguments between children who all want their choices. Once children come up with ideas – want it now!	None Their ideas may not be what you want. Children may want to take it too far. Some things may not be appropriate.

			Children don't always understand difficulties & can feel let down if they don't get what they want. Can be difficult with very young children.	
<b>Aspects on which pupils should be consulted</b>	<b>Classroom Input</b>	<b>Staff Attitudes regarding pupil feedback into Teaching &amp; Learning</b>	Initially I would be doubtful but as long as it was in conjunction with other opinions. I already do thumbs up/thumbs down – good but pupils may need training/taught boundaries. Fine – it's good. Could be good and bad – depends on children. Not particularly comfortable as I don't like criticism. OK as long as constructive.	Only if they're asked – not all the time. Could be good but need a balance x2. Yes (positive).
		<b>Classroom Layout</b>	Yes x 5 Within reason x 1	Yes x 3 To a certain extent x 1
		<b>Teaching &amp; Learning</b>	Yes x 4 Possibly x 1                      Not sure x 1	Yes x 3 Possibly x 1
		<b>Curriculum Decisions</b>	Within reason x 4 Yes x 2	Yes to some extent x 1 No x 2 Yes x 1
	<b>General Input</b>	<b>School Council</b>	Yes x 6	Yes x 4
		<b>Anti-bullying Committee</b>	Yes x 6	Yes x 4
		<b>Outdoor Environment</b>	Yes x 6	Yes x 4
		<b>Input into Governor Meetings</b>	Yes x 5 Older ones could x 1	Possibly x 1 Yes x 1 No x 2
		<b>Financial Decisions</b>	Within reason x 3 Depends – possibly x 2 No x 1	To some extent x 1 No x 2 Don't know x 1
		<b>Other Possible Areas</b>	Rewards & Consequences x 1 Transport/Parking Issues x 2 School Meal Input x 3	School Meals x 4 After school Clubs x 1

As can be seen, initial responses were largely favourable with non-teaching staff able to give more detailed examples to the open questions about the possible advantages and disadvantages of pupil voice activities within school, pointing to reasons which involved pupils feeling more part of the community.

“ I think because children are here for the best part of the day, they need to be happy, they need to be content, they need to feel safe and they need to feel that they are part of our school family therefore they need to be heard.”  
(NT1, 2007)

Another non-teacher also discussed how pupil input may help broaden the perspective of staff:

“Well, you can get their perspective about what we do and why we do it and what’s important to them... and I think we have, like you said before, very fixed ideas about the ways it should be done and what we are being shown and told should be done with children but that might not be the best way of doing it for them and if they can tell us the ways they prefer to learn and prefer things to be done then we can adapt that and help them in that way.” (NT3, 2007)

Of the six teaching staff, whilst all could give some positive outcomes for pupil voice, five could also provide some detailed responses of what the negative effects may be, such as:

“...it depends on the children. Em.. what the children are at the time depends on which class you’d do it with because some classes you’d find it quite difficult because of the mixture of children – do you involve them all? Em.. (long pause) The other thing is it depends on what sort of teacher you are – whether you can accept it or not. Whether you can involve the children with the decision making. Because if you want to hold on to everything, just giving them that freedom to, to put their point of view and actually take part and suggest things to do, that could really threaten you.” (T3, 2007)

When given the opportunity to respond to open questions, teaching staff were able to give quite detailed responses, some of which outlined their concerns.

#### **i. General Input**

Staff responses, both teaching and non-teaching, towards aspects under the ‘General Input’ headings were very favourable, particularly towards pupil involvement into aspects such as the ‘Anti-bullying Committee’, ‘School Council’ and ‘Planning the Outdoor Environment’, where all respondents, teachers and non-teachers agreed pupils should have some input. It was interesting to note that teaching staff were more open to the notion of pupils having input into ‘Governing Meetings’ or ‘Financial Decisions’ than the non-teaching staff, perhaps because

teachers were comfortable with pupils making responsible decisions as long as they did not impact too directly on their (the teachers') professionalism.

## **ii. Classroom Input**

When considering 'Classroom Layout' most staff (5 from 6 teachers and 3 from 4 non-teachers) believed pupils should have an input although there wasn't much evidence that staff did this. When analysing responses to feedback into 'Teaching and Learning' and Curriculum Decisions', the position is less clear.

When staff were asked how they felt about pupils providing feedback into these areas their answers were doubtful, particularly from teaching staff with initial concerns tending to focus on fear of criticism and loss of control. When asked about her views of pupil input into teaching and learning, one teacher said:

"Emm, it would probably bother me initially, because from a child's perspective they will only get their narrow view of it. But providing that was taken into conjunction with, say, my views, and say, your views of the lesson...But yes, obviously to start with I would be.. mmm (doubtful noises)." (T4, 2007)

and in response to the question, "are there any areas where you think pupils shouldn't be consulted?" another teacher responded:

"..... maybe things that affect teaching or the curriculum.." (T5, 2007)

thus highlighting the two areas most often seen as being at the heart of a teacher's professionalism. Furthermore, when asked explicitly about their views on pupil feedback into teaching and learning, only one teacher (T2) stated without reservation that it would be good, with those who said it *may* be good stating that some form of coaching or training would be needed and two openly stating they would not be comfortable with it. It may also be worth noting that apart from T2, none of the other teachers *sounded* very positive about the prospect – something that could be picked up from their tone of voice and pauses between questions on the recordings.

The views of the non-teaching staff were surprisingly similar to those of the teachers at this point, with only one (NT2) stating without reservation that



feedback into teaching and learning would be a good thing, whilst two others cited problems with this and one stated clearly that in her view pupils should feedback “..only when asked to” (NT4, 2007).

However, when staff were asked to look ahead two years and predict aspects they think pupils would be involved in within school then, their answers to closed questions were a lot more positive. They were asked for ‘yes’ or ‘no’ answers to a range of activities which included ‘feedback into teaching and learning’ with 4 from 6 teachers and 3 from 4 non-teachers agreeing this would happen and ‘curricular decisions’ with all teachers predicting this would happen (4 ‘within reason’) but two from four non-teachers thinking it would not happen.

### **iii. Summary**

At this point, staff were generally open to pupils being involved to some degree in the practical organisation of the school (planning the outdoor environment, classroom layout and the selection of some resources) and to pupil representation or involvement on committees (School Council or Anti-bullying Committee). When it came to aspects such as teaching and learning or the curriculum, views were less straightforward as well as less favourable. The more a participant considered the issue of pupil input into these areas, the more complex their answer became, with a range of issues being considered and staff starting to discuss and take account of both the positive and negative aspects. Concerns tended to reflect the view of staff that curriculum content and organisation was the domain of the teacher and that pupil opinion of a teacher’s delivery would be problematic for two main reasons. Firstly, pupils may take advantage of the situation if they disliked a particular teacher (see responses T3 & NT3) and secondly it could be seen as a challenge to the professionalism of teachers (see T4 & NT1).

To conclude, at the outset of this research period:

- Non-teaching staff were generally more positive to open questions
- Teaching staff gave more detailed negative responses to open questions
- All staff were very positive about pupils being involved in practical activities and in committees as long as this did not intrude on their professionalism
- All staff were more negative about pupils having input into teaching and learning and the curriculum although many predicted this may happen in future.

## **c. First Year Activities**

### **i. Preparing the Way**

Prior to the start of the research period I had prepared the way by developing a group of pupils as 'Pupils as Researchers' (PARs) within school, as outlined in Chapter 3 (h). This meant that when I introduced the notion of pupil voice staff could relate to it in a positive way and start to have an understanding of the positive impact it could have within school. The first project the PARs worked on concerned the development of outdoor play equipment, where benefits were obvious to staff without presenting them with any challenges to their own areas of expertise.

### **ii. Pupil Voice Activities**

Following the staff meeting at the start of the Autumn term 2007, I started to look for ways in which pupils could play a more active role within our school community and a summary of the main activities is set out in Table 2 below. As can be seen, the Pupils as Researchers group took on a significant role within school and staff, parents and Governors quickly came to appreciate the part they could play in shaping activities within school. Their status was further enhanced when their work was recognised by external bodies. Firstly they were asked to lead a workshop for delegates at the 2008 Durham Pupil Voice Conference and secondly their work led to the Impetus Award, celebrating 'shared values in action'.

During this first year, pupil voice activities came under the category 'General Impact', steering clear of issues which might have had an effect in the classroom. This approach was quite deliberate as I wanted staff to observe the possible benefits of pupil voice and grow more comfortable with the concept, without feeling their own professionalism was being challenged.

**Table 2: Summary of Pupil Voice Activities in 2007 - 2008**

ASPECT	CHANGE/ACTIVITY	RESULT
1. Re-organisation of School Council (Prior to this, 1 pupil from each class was elected by the others to represent the class)	2 pupils represent each class – 1 elected as before and the second pupil chosen by the teacher to attend one meeting.	i. Many more pupils have the chance to represent their class/participate in School Council meetings. ii. The School Council has a more diverse membership and is more representative of all groups of pupils within school.

2. Develop 'Pupils as Researchers' within school. (In Spring 2007, five Y6 pupils attended a training event led by Dr. Carol Robinson on the development of Pupils as Researchers. They carried out an activity and then moved on to secondary school.)	Having reviewed the 2007 PARs I felt that what it lacked was sustainability. I decided that this year I would train both Y5 and Y6 pupils so that next year the Y5s (when they moved into Y6) could help train the next group of Y5s etc. Our 2007 PARs noted difficulties in conducting research with the younger pupils.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. I trained 5 x Y6 PARs &amp; 6 x Y5 PARs together using a similar approach to that used by Dr. Robinson, based on her training materials. (see Robinson (2007)).</li> <li>ii. The pupils selected a research topic (developing a pupil newspaper) and drew up a questionnaire, which was adapted into semi-structured questions for the younger pupils.</li> <li>iii. PARs conducted research by administering questionnaires with Junior classes but (learning from last year's PARs) worked in threes (one to ask the questions and maintain eye contact, one to scribe and one to keep order) to interview Infant pupils in smaller nos.</li> <li>iv. Y6 PARs led a workshop at the 2008 Pupil Voice Conference for 24 delegates (HTs and advisory staff) sharing their experiences.</li> <li>v. Y5 PARs made a presentation at the 2008 Impetus awards Ceremony in Council Chambers at County Hall about the PAR work within our school.</li> </ul>
3. Pupils trained as 'Young Sports Leaders'.	Our Y5 class were trained by the School Sports Partnership to be Young Sports Leaders.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Our Young Sports Leaders took a significant role in running the 'Mini Olympics' event for Infant pupils from feeder schools at the local comprehensive.</li> <li>ii. They organised pupils, ran events, speaking with confidence and respect to all those they worked with, receiving very positive feedback from all those involved.</li> </ul>
4. School Council members became actively involved in the School Travel Plan.	School Council members worked on a power point highlighting parking problems around school.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Some Junior members of our School Council gave a power point presentation to the School Travel Planning Committee, filmed as part of Channel 4 Documentary "The Woman Who Stopped Traffic".</li> </ul>
5. The notion of feedback into teaching & learning was raised.	No change (staff not required to act on this at this time).	No change.

## **d. First Year Questionnaires**

### **i. Teacher Questionnaires (2008)**

In order to assess the initial impact that pupil voice activities were having within the school I carried out Questionnaires at the end of the first year (summer 2008) with teaching staff. They were informed that the information would contribute to the

School Development Plan and that both the positive and negative responses would be helpful. I deliberately chose not to involve non-teaching staff at this point as I wanted to include a particular focus on what, if anything, was happening within classes and so I wove these questions in with the rest. A copy of the Questionnaire together with a summary of the results is given within Appendix 5. During this first year another teacher joined our school and she participated in the research from this point on, increasing the teacher participants from six to seven.

Responses clearly indicate that teaching staff felt they had at least some understanding as to what is meant by the term pupil voice with all acknowledging that pupil voice activities take place within school, at least sometimes. Six of the seven teachers stated that pupil voice activities also took place within their classes – the other failing to answer this question, although all seven did respond to the question asking if pupil voice activities have had a positive impact on their class that year. To this, only one responded negatively and some examples accompanying the six positive answers, cited the following:

- Young Sports Leaders
- Newspaper
- Plan, Do, Review work

One member of staff wrote on the questionnaire,

“Certainly the opportunities the children have had to be involved in the newspaper and to work as Sports Leaders encouraged raised self-esteem and their involvement in the life of the school was appreciated and valued.”  
(T response to Questionnaire, July 2008)

expressing her opinion as to the value of pupil voice activities at this point. Two of the three activities mentioned by staff relate to ‘General Input’ but it is worth noting that already one member of staff discussed how she was starting to involve pupils in a ‘plan, do, review’ approach to their work, stating:

“this takes place a lot in our class so that the children have an input in their learning.”  
(T, July 2008)

Teachers were asked to rate the success of various pupil voice activities on a scale of 1 – 6 but one teacher stated;

“I’m not sure that I could confidently rate the success of these activities because although I know they take place in school, I’m not sure to what extent they are successful.” (T, July 2008)

It is important to consider the other answers on the questionnaire sheet which sit alongside this teacher’s response when trying to interpret it. The teacher’s other responses were all very favourable – indeed it was possibly the most favourable return from all the staff and so we might assume that she felt activities were to some degree positive.

Of the activities listed, staff generally thought that the School Council, Young Sports Leaders, PARs, Pupil Newspaper and General Pupil Questionnaire were the most successful. Pupil input into the School Travel Plan was not regarded to have been particularly successful – perhaps because this activity was over quite a brief timeframe, and interestingly the PARs input into the playground equipment was not particularly rated by school staff at this time, although this changes later on.

The question about whether they felt pupil voice activities had a negative impact within class divided staff – with three believing that sometimes it did (although no examples of this were given) whilst four felt it did not. However, this changes when considering the impact of pupil voice within school – with one teacher unsure, five believing they sometimes had a negative impact and only one teacher believing that this was never the case. The following comment was offered for clarification at this point:

“If there’s only a few children involved they miss out on the general lesson although they can catch up.” (T, July 2008)

Her point here was alluding to the fact that some pupil voice activities took place in lesson time and so pupils may have to miss lessons in order to participate. This brings to light one of the most problematic areas surrounding pupil voice – when and where it takes place, and at what cost. I shall return to this issue in Chapter 5.

Finally, all teachers felt that pupil voice activities were helping school to grow and develop, at least some of the time (four responses), with two believing this was often the case and one teacher believing pupil voice activities always had a positive impact. Whilst no-one gave specific examples of this here, one teacher did say:

“It allows children to feel more of a part of their school, more valued and appreciated.”  
(T, July 2008)

In conclusion, by the end of the first year of the research period, the ‘plan, do and review’ activity was the only evidence available that a teacher was providing opportunities for her pupils to have an input into to their own learning.

## **ii. Pupil Questionnaires (2008)**

The school carries out Annual Pupil Questionnaires, usually in the summer term. In 2008 the questionnaire was completely rewritten to allow pupils to give more detailed responses and to cover a wider range of aspects than had previously been the case. A copy of the 2008 Questionnaire is given in Appendix 6. Pupils were asked to give quantitative responses to some questions, selecting from the alternatives *Always*, *Nearly Always*, *Sometimes* and *Never*. They were also asked more open-ended questions requiring qualitative responses – either through words or pictures, for example:

“If you have time and would like to, you can draw two pictures of write about a time when: you feel your views were listened to and you feel your views were not listened to”  
(Pupil Questionnaire 2008, Q3)

When conducting the pupil questionnaires, Reception and Year 1 pupils usually complete these in groups, so that an adult helper can provide necessary support in reading the questions and recording answers. Pupils in Years 2, 3 and 4 are normally given the questionnaire and write their responses as the teacher reads out each question, one at a time. Whilst there is time given at the end for pupils to complete their responses, the time for each question is dictated by the teacher. The older pupils in Years 5 and 6, are given the questionnaire and can fill these in on their own in class at a designated time, taking as long as they need. Pupils with special needs in all classes can complete their responses with the assistance of a

classroom assistant or voluntary helper. When all the questionnaires had been completed they were analysed and summarised class by class and then given to teachers. A summary questionnaire, taking account of the results of all the pupil questionnaire responses together is given in Appendix 5.

Generally speaking, responses were largely positive with many of the questions resulting in over two-thirds (over 67%) of pupils answering in the most positive categories. The exceptions to these which relate to the extent pupils feel involved in school are listed below. These include within the 'Feeling Included' category:

FEELING INCLUDED	sometimes	never
<i>I feel my views count in class</i>	29%	7%
<i>I feel I'm important in this school</i>	28%	19%
<i>I feel my views count in this school</i>	38%	10%

which gives some indication of how involved pupils feel within school at this time. Another section of the pupil questionnaire relates to the extent pupils feel involved in what happens in school and is called 'Feeling in Control'. Here again, responses were largely positive and the lowest responses were for:

FEELING IN CONTROL	sometimes	never
<i>I learn things which are interesting</i>	29%	4%
<i>If there was something I wanted to learn about I think my teacher would try and teach it.</i>	26%	10%

indicating that a significant number of pupils don't find what they are learning about interesting or feel that their teacher wouldn't try to teach what they wanted to learn. However, most pupils thought that their teachers were helpful and paced their teaching well – going neither too fast nor too slow. Pupils were also mostly confident and thought they were good at most subjects – the exception being science where 45% of pupils felt that either sometimes or always they were not good at learning this subject.

The most negative section in the 2008 questionnaires was entitled 'About Being in School' where nearly half the responses fell into the 'sometimes' or 'never'

categories – the exception relating to pupils feeling able to share good ideas or concerns with their teacher. This group included the extent to which the School Council helps to get things done where 45% pupils thought this was only 'sometimes' (28%) or 'never' (17%) and the extent to which pupils help make some decisions with 34% 'sometimes' and 8% 'never'.

To summarise, at this point a significant number of pupils, over a third, feel that their views don't often count and that pupils don't often help shape decisions, and that they quite often learn things that don't interest them.

### **iii. Parent Questionnaires (2008)**

The annual Parent Questionnaires for 2008 were carried out in March of that year and a copy of this is given in Appendix 7. Parents were given 16 questions to which they selected quantitative responses from the following: *Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree and Don't Know*. The questions included two relating to pupil involvement in school, namely:

Q7: *The school encourages children to get involved in more than just daily lessons.* and

Q12: *The school takes accounts of children's views.*

as well as four open-ended, qualitative questions to which parents could write their own responses. This parent questionnaire had been used the previous year by the school and had not been altered in any way for 2008. A summary of the findings, derived from 26 responses is given in Appendix 6.

For Question 7, 73% of parents felt that the school does encourage pupils to get involved in more than just lessons whilst only 4% felt didn't. The remaining 23% didn't know. This is echoed in Question 12 – where 27% of parents weren't sure if the school took account of pupils' views, with 65% agreeing or strongly agreeing that school did. Interestingly, of all sixteen questions, those two relating to pupil voice were the only ones where more than 20% of parents weren't sure.

There were no comments regarding pupil voice in any of the four open-ended questions.



#### iv. Summary of Responses (2008)

At the end of the first year of the research period the picture emerging is one where staff feel reasonably comfortable involving pupils in aspects falling within 'General Input' but felt those coming under 'Classroom Input' (see 4a (i) and (ii)) were largely beyond that which they considered pupils should be involved. A significant number of pupils, over a third, felt their views weren't considered and that they had little control over what they learned and parents had little to say on the subject of pupil voice, with over 20% indicating 'Don't know' in response to questions 7 and 12 regarding pupil voice on their annual questionnaire. These three responses taken together would indicate that whilst pupils may be becoming a little more involved in school life, this did not extend to aspects of Teaching, Learning or the Curriculum, whilst more parents were unclear about what was going on in school concerning pupil voice than any other activity.

#### e. Second Year Activities

During the second year there was an increase in both the number of activities taking place involving pupils and the scope of those relating to pupil voice, as can be seen in the summary given below in Table 3.

**Table 3: Summary of Pupil Voice Activities in 2008 – 2009**

ASPECT	CHANGE/ACTIVITY	RESULT
1) Continued with the Pupils as Researchers (PARs) work.	As last year's Y5 PARs moved into Y6 they then supported me in training the new Y5 PARs. Pupils chose to investigate the local Play Park and support the work of a local committee.	i. Y6 PARs helped train the new Y5 PARs and ensured training was relevant. ii. PARs supported the work of the local Play Park Committee and their work may have contributed to a successful bid for a new park in our locality. iii. PARs drew up a questionnaire to obtain pupil opinion. iv. PARs met with School Councils of two schools who were close to the proposed park and they too completed the questionnaires, thus providing a wider sample. v. PARs made a presentation to Play Park Committee, sharing their findings so far. vi. PARs presented to the Durham Pupil Voice Conference 'PARs: The Play Park'. vii. The PARs power point was submitted to the Unicef website as an example of PAR work.

2) Development of a 'Pupil Charter'	School Council worked with members of Equality & Diversity group to develop Pupil Charters	<p>i. Pupils chose to draw up 2 charters – one for the Infants and one for the Juniors with slightly different language.</p> <p>ii. Pupil Charters were displayed at the Durham Pupil Voice Conference and have been placed on the Durham Schools Extranet as exemplars.</p> <p>iii. Pupil Charters are central to ethos of our school.</p>
3) Young Sports Leaders	Y5 Pupils trained as Young Sports Leaders ( – as last year)	Y5 pupils are trained as YSL and help organise and run 'Mini-Olympics' event for local Infant pupils from 5 schools.
4) Anti-bullying Work	<p>a) Pupils and adults in Anti-bullying Committee decided how to celebrate Anti-bullying week.</p> <p>b) Anti-bullying Support Worker trained 8 x Y6 pupils as Mediators.</p>	<p>i. All pupils decorated a T-shirt (donated by Asda) around the theme "Being Different, Belonging Together" and wore them to celebrate Anti-bullying Week.</p> <p>ii. Winning T-shirts were displayed at the local Asda store</p> <p>iii. Pupils and adults worked together to explore A-B work.</p> <p>iv. Mediators offer appointments to solve friendship issues for other pupils.</p>
5) Enterprise Work	Y3 and Y4 pupils took part in Enterprise training events. Y6 pupils started an Enterprise Group, developing jewellery, later supported by Y5	<p>i. Y3 and Y4 classes undertook 10 week programmes exploring Enterprise themes around 'My Town' and 'My City'. They carried out a presentation at the end.</p> <p>ii. The Y6 Enterprise group developed their business, purchasing a display board with some of the proceeds. They won 'Durham Young Enterprise' event in July 09. Later supported by Y5.</p> <p>iii. Pupils ran a variety of stalls at the Christmas Fair, selling items they had made.</p>
6) Video and Photographic Policy	Governors consulted pupils on a review of the Video and Photographic Policy.	<p>i. Governors consulted pupils on the policy review demonstrating an understanding that pupils' views are central to school, recognising a shift in school ethos. (This was the first time such a suggestion had been made by anyone other than the HT)</p> <p>ii. Pupils' views formed the basis of the new policy.</p>
7) Pupil Feedback	All staff embark on feedback from pupils.	Teachers initiate & share a range of strategies to obtain feedback from pupils regarding teaching and learning.
8) Topic Planning	One year group pilot a new approach to Topic Planning.	Teacher identifies topic, pupils come up with what they want to explore and how to do so.

### **i. Existing Practices**

Some activities which had been introduced previously continued and in some cases developed further. These included:

- Pupils as Researchers, now researching a local play park

- Anti-bullying Work, including Mini-Buds, Buddies and Mediators
- Young Sports Leaders, who continued to help run the Mini-Olympics

Of the above, the Pupils as Researchers most significantly developed during the course of the year as the group expanded their research sample to include pupils at two other local schools. By selecting the focus for its research, the PARs were also looking to move the scope of their work away from the school into the local community as the group decided to lend its active support to the work of a local Play Park Committee who had been trying for some time to raise sufficient funds for the development of a high quality play park for the area. In drawing up their questionnaire, pupils included some of the Articles from the United Nations Rights of the Child (1989) as well as four of the five key outcomes set out in Every Child Matters (HMSO 2003). This immediately lent a degree of validity to their work and this work was shared with the Play Park Committee, who soon after secured in excess of £60,000 to secure the future of the park. Whilst no attempt is made to draw any inference here as to cause and effect, that is I am not claiming that the involvement of the pupils ultimately led to the local community obtaining a play park, their involvement would certainly not harmed the committee when they were applying for grants and bidding for money.

The groups working to support our anti-bullying initiatives continued to develop with the Mediators becoming more instrumental in resolving conflict between children through their appointment system at lunchtimes. The group are initially trained by a member of the Durham Anti-bullying team and supported by a Learning Support Assistant within school. Pupils reported that they found the Mediators very helpful and it was evident (through questionnaires and discussions) that other pupils had great respect for them.

The Youth Sports Leaders (a different cohort, but trained in the same way as last year) once more carried out their role superbly – again receiving very positive feedback from other schools.

## **ii. New Initiatives**

The school had formed a working party to focus on various issues surrounding Equality and Diversity and as part of this work the group were looking at ways of embedding these concepts within the ethos of the school. It was immediately

evident that the pupils would need to play a central part in this and from an initial meeting with them the idea of developing a Pupil Charter for the school was proposed. From this point on, the School Council members were central to the development of what became two slightly different charters – the Infant Charter being a slight modification of the Junior Charter. The children made this decision as they wanted all pupils to fully understand the charters. Since their development, the Charters have been placed on our local authority website and displayed at a conference as examples of good practice.

The school embraced various ‘enterprise’ activities – both through class lessons and through an Enterprise Group (about a dozen Year 5 and Year 6 pupils). The Enterprise Group established a jewellery-making business and entered the local authority Primary Enterprise Challenge, where they had to present a powerpoint they had developed themselves about their business, set up and run their stall, selling their jewellery to members of the public. They won this event, demonstrating the very high standard of their work.

One of the most notable events during the second year came when the Governing Body was reviewing the Video and Photographic Policy - this was a major undertaking as parents were divided over this issue. One of the Governors suggested that we involved the pupils and found out what they wanted as it would be them who would be photographed/videoed. Immediately Governors agreed that this would be not only helpful, but appropriate and *right*. Prior to this it would be fair to say that Governors made decisions about the pupils, without their involvement, whereas from this point Governors have started to make decisions **for** pupils, **with** the pupils.

### **iii. Pilot Activities**

Having discussed with staff some of the activities that were successfully taking place in other schools, teachers began to look into ways of gathering feedback from pupils regarding their teaching and learning. This ranged from simple responses such as ‘thumbs up’ or ‘thumbs down’ to the teacher asking questions such as: “if I were to do that lesson again, what could I do differently?”. Towards the end of the summer term, the strategies teachers used were discussed and shared with each other, with the result that teachers were learning from each other and trying new strategies.

During the second year one class piloted a new approach to topic planning where the subject of a topic was presented to pupils who were then given the responsibility to decide which areas they wanted to explore, what questions they wanted answered and then what methods they wanted to use to explore this topic. They initially did so by having the title in the middle of a large sheet of paper on which pupils stuck post-it notes with their questions. Answers to these were then noted and put underneath so the class could monitor progress. Pupils also discussed what strategies they could use to find the answers. Initial feedback indicated that pupils became more engaged and they covered some aspects of the topic which extended beyond what the teacher may have planned herself.

#### **iv. Summary of Activities (2008 – 2009)**

By the end of the second year it is clear that pupils are having more input into the school in a range of ways – from helping support their peers in the playground and running mediation sessions to having an input into policy formation. Teachers were becoming more confident with pupil voice activities and whilst this was still in the early stages, they were starting to move beyond ‘General Input’ activities towards those falling within ‘Classroom Input’, with everyone using some strategies to obtain feedback about their teaching from pupils. In addition, one teacher was also piloting a new approach to topic planning which involved the views and ideas of pupils.

### **f. Second Year Interviews & Questionnaires**

#### **i. Staff Interviews (2009)**

At the end of the second year, I interviewed thirteen participants - seven teachers and six non-teaching members of staff using broadly the same interview questions as those used in autumn 2007. Changes included asking staff about the activities they used to obtain feedback from pupils regarding teaching and learning (replacing the question about staff attitudes to this) and asking if pupils should be involved in decisions about school meals. The new participants, who had all been working in the school since summer term 2008 are identified as T7, NT5 and NT6 and the transcripts for all the recorded interviews are included in Appendix 3 (teachers) and Appendix 4 (non-teaching staff). A brief summary of all staff responses is given as Table 4 below:

**Table 4: Summary of Staff Responses at End of Second Year**

Aspect		Teacher Responses		Non-teacher Responses	
Possible Advantages of Pupil Voice Activities		Feel more involved – increased motivation and better behaviour	x 3	x 1	
		Enjoy things more/feel happier	x 3	x 4	
		Feel more part of it/ownership	x 3	x 2	
		Pupils grow in confidence	x 1	x 1	
		Know what they are interested in		x 3	
Possible Disadvantages of Pupil Voice Activities		Pupils need to realise what they say doesn't automatically happen	x 2	x 1	
		If there is no follow through pupils will feel disappointed	x 1		
		Some areas not appropriate for pupils	x 1		
		Sometimes pupils may suggest something inappropriate/need boundaries	x 2	x 1	
		Pupil feedback may result in teachers questioning their teaching	x 1		
		Pupils can't have run of school	x 1		
		Getting balance between respect & control		x 3	
		I haven't experienced any	x 1		
		None, just barriers to be overcome	x 1		
Aspects on which pupils should be consulted	Classroom Impact	Activities used to obtain feedback into Teaching & Learning	Thumbs up and thumbs down x 7 Traffic lights x 2 Smiley faces x 1 Have you liked it/verbal comment x 4 How to do it differently next time x 4 What have you thought/learned x 2 What else could we cover x 1 Have you learned x 2 Peer marking x 2 Pupil questionnaire as well x 1 Lots of Assess for Learn activities x 1	Yes – teachers checking the pace is good x 1 T's checking on pupil learning x 1 Self assessment at the end of lessons x 2 Thumbs up and thumbs down x 1 Checking if work is easy/hard x 2 Asking pupils what they want to learn about next x 1	
		Classroom Layout	Yes x 3 Maybe x 1	Yes x 3    Depends x 1 Not sure x 1	
		Teaching & L.	Yes x 7	Yes x 6	
		Curriculum Decisions	Yes x 5 Yes, but a limit x 2	Yes x 5 Perhaps x 1	
	General Input	School Meal	Yes x 5	Yes x 6	
		School Council	Yes x 7	Yes x 6	
		Anti-bullying	Yes x 6	Yes x 6	
		Outdoor Env.	Yes x 6	Yes x 6	
		Input into Gov. Body Meetings	Yes x 5 (2 – report of something they've done) Not sure x 1 No, children too young x 1	Yes x 6	
		Financial Decisions	Depends x 3 If they'd raised money for something, yes x 3	Yes x 2    Depends x 1 No x 1    Not sure x 2	

		<b>Other Possible Areas</b>  <b>Including New School Building</b>	Maybe involved in performances i.e. selecting costumes etc. x 1 Mini PTA Committee x 1 Maybe activities at lunchtime x 1 Extending curriculum – deciding which visitors to have in/visits to go on x 1 Art work in corridors x 2 Markings on yard x 1 Paint work in new building x 1	<b>(new school building)</b> Colours x 1 Furniture x 2 Involved in input (but not specific about how) x 1
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At the end of the second year, staff once more responded to the question asking them to rate themselves on a scale of 1 to 6 with '1' indicating children shouldn't have much say in school and '6' indicating pupils should have a great deal of say. Staff responded as follows:

**Table 5: Staff Ratings for Pupil Involvement, Summer 2009**

	Rating	No. of Responses	%
Teacher Responses	3/4	0	0
	4	4	57
	4/5	0	0
	5	1	14
	6	2	29
Non-teacher Responses	3/4	1	17
	4	3	50
	4/5	1	17
	5	1	17
	6	0	0

As can be seen, the teachers gave more positive responses to this question than the non-teaching staff with no teachers rating it as less than 4. In addition, 43% of teachers rated this as 5 or above against 17% of non-teaching staff. Staff who gave a rating of 4, teaching and non-teaching, focused on the need for balance giving comments such as this teacher's comment:

"I do think they should have a lot of say but balanced with guidance from teachers and teaching staff."  
 (T7 (rating 4) 2009)

which was very similar to these comments from non-teaching staff:

“I think they should have an opinion, but I don’t think that they should think they’re going to run the place whole-heartedly.” (NT1 (rating 4) 2009)

“It’s important that we understand their point of view and aspects of their life that we can focus on, but I also agree that you know, we are kind of ‘in charge’ if you like. We need to take overall control..”  
(NT3 (rating 4/5) 2009)

Teachers who gave the highest ratings, stating their belief that pupils should have a great deal of say within school provided responses such as:

“I do think as far as their school work is concerned – they generally have an idea of what will work and why it will work and they are much more intuitive – certainly in Key stage 2 than I thought two years ago.”  
(T4 (rating 5) 2009)

indicating pupil input into the curriculum was a positive thing. This was then reflected in the comment:

“I think seeing how well it’s worked this year I’ve been edging towards the 6.... I know from my class how much (they’ve) got out of doing something that they’ve wanted to do, they’ve had a say in. Even like within class – in class when you’ve been doing topics – the kids might come up with, ‘oh Miss what about this?’ And you do something that they want to do.”  
(T6 (rating 6) 2009)

This is in contrast to one of the non-teaching staff who was clear that the curriculum was an area pupils shouldn’t be involved in:

“I don’t think pupils should have all the say like not on what the teacher delivers in the class and stuff like that. But they need to be up there and voicing their opinions.”  
(NT2 (rating 4) 2009)

although this was the only comment made reflecting this opinion.



### **a) Possible Disadvantages of Involving Pupils**

The responses given by teaching staff to the possible disadvantages of involving pupils in decisions about school can be summarised into three broad categories:

1. Some aspects may be inappropriate for pupils to be involved in
2. Pupils may feel let down if things don't go as they anticipated
3. Feedback from pupils may have a negative impact on teachers.

The last of these was only suggested by one teacher and it should be noted that two teachers (from 7) did not cite any disadvantages.

Responses from non-teaching staff were focused around pupils understanding boundaries and that pupils shouldn't be allowed to think they could control everything. Three of the non-teaching staff stated that pupils should be clear that it was the teachers who were in charge, for example:

“..they should remember that the teaching staff are there to tell them what to do and it shouldn't be vice-versa”  
(NT4 2009)

This is interesting because at this point it seems that it is the teaching staff who are starting to see the relationship between pupils and staff as one of a partnership whilst some of the non-teaching staff are saying that they think

“it should be the teachers who (are) telling the children what to do.”  
(NT6 2009)

### **b) General Input**

Staff responses to the areas covered under the heading 'General Input' were very favourable with the only areas providing doubtful or negative responses being “Input into Governing Body Meetings”, with the doubtful responses coming from teachers of young children and “Financial Decisions” where positive responses were mainly qualified by the fact that this would relate to something the children were involved in themselves.

### **c) Classroom Input**

Most staff, teaching and non-teaching gave positive responses to pupils being involved in curricular decisions, with two teachers suggesting this may be within a

limit, and one non-teacher giving a vague “perhaps” in answer to the question. This was similar to the outcomes relating to classroom layout – which were largely positive, with uncertain responses coming from one teacher and two non-teachers. Staff all gave positive responses at once to the notion of pupils having input into teaching and learning and both teachers and non-teaching staff gave many examples of things that were currently taking place within school.

#### **d) Summary of Staff Responses**

Responses to the interview questions at the end of the second year show that staff were largely in favour of pupils having input into many areas of school life – both ‘General Input’ and ‘Classroom Input’. Overall, teachers gave more positive responses than the non-teaching staff at this point – although there was not a great deal of negativity expressed from either group. No members of staff expressed concern that pupils may take advantage of the situation when providing input into the school, although one teacher did infer that negative feedback may have a detrimental effect on staff who “might start to question their teaching” (T5 2009).

At this point in the research period:

- Teaching staff were slightly more positive than non-teaching staff
- Both groups of staff were generally positive about pupils being involved in all aspects of school life, including General Input and Classroom Input
- Teachers’ responses suggested that they were beginning to see ‘pupil input’ into aspects such as teaching and learning and the curriculum as worthwhile and helpful in shaping the direction of the school.

#### **ii. Pupil Questionnaires (2009)**

The Annual Pupil Questionnaire in 2009 took place in May and a copy of this is given in Appendix 6. Prior to being administered, the 2009 Pupil Questionnaire was adapted to include the addition of a twelfth question – asking pupils to indicate which, if any, pupil voice activities they had been involved in from School Council, School Newspaper, Enterprise Group, Pupils as Researchers, Mini-bud, Buddy, Mediator and Sports Leader. This was to determine the proportion of children involved in pupil voice activities within the school, so in addition to analysing the responses to each individual category, I also noted the number of responses which included *any* pupil voice activity and these are given as Table 6 below:

**Table 6: Number Involved in Pupil Voice Activities 2009**

Class	No. in Class	No. Involved in PV Activity	%
Reception	17	4	24%
Year 1	14	2	14%
Year 2	17	17	100%
Total for Infants	48	23	48%
Year 3	24	7	29%
Year 4	12	12	100%
Year 5	22	18	82%
Year 6	28	26	93%
Total for Juniors	86	63	73%
Overall Totals	134	86	64%

As can be seen, slightly less than half of all Infant pupils have taken part in pupil voice activities whilst this rises to almost three-quarters in the Juniors, giving an overall percentage for the school being 64%. The activities open to pupils in Key Stage 2 are set out in Table 7 below:

**Table 7: Key Stage 2 Pupil Voice Participation Summer 2009**

	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6
School Council	√	√	√	√
School Newspaper			√	√
Enterprise Group			√	√
Pupils as Researchers (PARs)			√	√
Buddy	√	√	√	√
Mediator				√
Sports Leader			√	

From this it is clear that there are many more opportunities for pupils in Years 5 and 6 than there are for pupils in Years 3 and 4 and this is noted the following year by some pupils.

In 2009, most responses from pupils were very positive with most questions gaining more than two-thirds in the 'always' and 'nearly always' categories. The exceptions to these, relating to the extent to which pupils feel involved in school, are given in Table 8 below which also offers a comparison with the 2008 results:

**Table 8: Comparison of Pupil Questionnaire Responses 2008 and 2009**

	2008			2009		
	Always OR Nearly Always	Sometimes	Never	Always OR Nearly Always	Sometimes	Never
<b>Feeling Included</b>						
I feel my views count in this class	65%	29%	7%	87%	11%	2%
I feel I'm important in this school	53%	28%	19%	70%	21%	8%
I feel my views count in this school	52%	38%	10%	74%	20%	6%
<b>Feeling In Control</b>						
I learn things which are interesting	67%	29%	4%	85%	10%	2%
If there was something I wanted to learn about I think my teacher would try and teach it	60%	26%	10%	79%	16%	4%
I think pupils in this school help make some of the decisions	55%	34%	8%	78%	19%	2%
I think the School Council helps pupils to get things done in school	51%	28%	17%	66%	25%	8%
<b>Feeling Confident</b>						
I feel I do well at this school	76%	19%	4%	86%	11%	3%
Teachers at this school like me	68%	24%	6%	86%	11%	3%

As can be seen, there is an increase of around 20% in the positive responses to the above categories from 2008 to 2009, indicating that pupils feel they have more of a say in what is happening and that their school is beginning to take more account of their views. This is reinforced with the reduction of the most negative

response ‘never’ – in most cases a reduction of at least half. These findings echo the responses given above in Table 6 where two-thirds of the school participate in some form of pupil voice activity.

### **iii. Parent Questionnaires (2009)**

The annual Parent Questionnaire for 2009 took place in June of that year with 38 responses submitted. A copy of the questionnaire together with a summary of the results is given in Appendix 7. The closed questions in the 2009 questionnaire were broadly similar to that of 2008 with a few minor alterations. Responses to Question 7 indicate that more parents now felt the school encouraged pupils to get involved in more than daily lessons, now 92% selecting *Strongly Agree* or *Agree* from 73% in 2008 with only 3% indicating that they *Didn’t Know* – much lower than the 23% which gave this response in 2008. However, whilst there was a 6% increase (71% from 65%) in positive responses to Question 12, *The school takes account of children’s views* there were still 24% of parents (nearly a quarter) in 2009 who indicated that they *Didn’t Know* and selected this as a response.

Turning to the open-ended questions, 17, 18 and 20 remained the same. Question 19 was completely altered to the following:

“We are continually developing the way pupils can have an input into our school – for example through our School Council, Pupils as Researchers and Family Groups as well as through in-class discussions and pupil feedback into teaching and learning. What are your views on this and do you have any other suggestions of ways in which pupils can be involved?”

Whilst this may seem a rather lengthy question, I felt it was necessary to remind parents of some of the activities pupils are involved in within school which allow them to help shape their school experience. Twelve parents, nearly a third of those who took part, chose to give a written response to this with five of these simply commenting along the lines of these being “excellent ideas” which were “handled very well”. Three parents stated that they thought we should ensure these activities were “inclusive and involve all children of all abilities” – something we do strive to do. Two others made suggestions for additional ways in which pupils could be involved and these included the following:

- “Have a pupils’ suggestions box
- Have a ‘Teacher Day’ when pupils get to be in the teacher’s shoes – makes them more aware of the teacher’s role in class
- Develop a SNAG group to help with lunch-time issues”  
(suggestions offered to Q19 Parent Questionnaire, 2009)

Of the final two responses, one simply stated that they were unsure the extent to which their daughter was involved in this but thought this might change as she got older (she was in Year 1) but that they “couldn’t fault this nor think of ways to improve it”. The final written response was the only one to state a cautionary or conditional note, stating:

“I think it’s important that children have a channel to have their opinions heard but I think that it’s more important children understand the school rules and behave well.” (Response to Q19 Parent Questionnaire, 2009)

Overall, parents were very supportive of these activities and the suggestions which were offered were considered during the following year, as will be seen.

#### **iv. Summary of Responses (2009)**

The views of all groups – staff, pupils and parents - would indicate that the school community was more positive about the concept of pupil voice. Staff were extending their range of activities involving pupils, beyond those previously identified as ‘General Input’, to include those listed as ‘Classroom Input’. They were all involving pupils in some feedback into teaching and learning, whilst one teacher was also trialling pupil input into the curriculum. Parents could see the benefits of pupils having an input into school life and a third of those responding in writing expressed the view that these opportunities should be open to all pupils. The pupils felt more included and believed they were becoming more involved in shaping decisions within the school. Approximately half of the pupils aged between 4 and 7 were involved in pupil voice activities whilst nearly three-quarters of those pupils aged between 7 and 11 were involved, indicating that at this time there were more opportunities for pupil involvement for those who were in the top two year groups within the school.

## g. Third Year Activities

During the third and final year of the research period there was a distinct increase in the number of activities which involved pupils within school. A summary of these is given in Table 9 below:

**Table 9: Summary of Pupil Voice Activities in 2009 - 2010**

ASPECT	CHANGE/ACTIVITY	RESULT
1) Enterprise Work	School introduces an Enterprise Week for Y6 pupils	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Y6 participate in an Enterprise Week, competing in groups against each other to design, make and market Smoothies. This ends with a 'Dragon's Den' event where groups pitch to a panel of professionals from the world of commerce.</li> <li>ii. Y3, Y4 and Y5 pupils participate in Enterprise training, delivered by 'Young Enterprise' org.</li> <li>iii. Pupils from Y5 &amp; Y6 expand jewellery business creating bespoke pieces.</li> <li>iv. Pupils sell glow sticks at Prom to raise funds for cheerleading outfits.</li> </ul>
2) Anti-bullying Work and Friendship Work	<p>Pupils continue to train as Mini-Buds, Buddies and Mediators.</p> <p>Y4 pupils help out on the Infant Yard.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Mini-Buds and Buddies continue to help out in the playground, looking after other pupils.</li> <li>ii. Y6 Mediators continue to run sessions for KS2 pupils to help resolve friendship issues.</li> <li>i. Pupils write about their roles for the school magazine.</li> <li>ii. Y4 pupils work in the Infant Yard, promoting games and supporting activities.</li> </ul>
3) Pupils as Researchers	PARs investigate new area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Last year's Y5 PARs (now in Y6) train this year's Y5 PARs.</li> <li>ii. PARs look into how to develop the outdoor space around the new building.</li> <li>iii. PARs look at how the corridor space within the new building can be developed.</li> <li>iv. PARs look into signage for the new building, including notice boards etc.</li> <li>v. PARs draw up questionnaire for whole school on colours of pegs for the new cloakrooms. They then carried out survey, analysed results and shared the outcomes. The coat peg colours for each class were determined by the PARs.</li> </ul>

4) Sports Leaders	Y5 pupils train as Young Sports Leaders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Y5 Pupils continue to help run Mini-Olympic event for local primary schools.</li> <li>ii. Young Sports Leaders help organise Sports Day and help train Infants for the events.</li> </ul>
5) Pupil Feedback	All teachers actively seek feedback from pupils regarding teaching and learning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Staff continue to develop ways of obtaining feedback from pupils (thumbs up and thumbs down through to "If I did it again what could I do differently?" etc.)</li> <li>ii. Staff share their strategies at a staff meeting, discussing what worked well in which situations.</li> <li>iii. Staff start to adapt teaching to suit needs of class.</li> </ul>
6) Topic Planning	Building on pilot last year, all classes have input into their class Topic Plans.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. All classes determine direction of their Topic Work through identifying key questions/areas to be investigated and then agreeing how this is to be done.</li> <li>ii. Staff adapt the way they plan – moving from planning a topic in advance to developing a topic with the pupils, using their areas of interest and ideas as the focus.</li> <li>iii. Teachers and pupils work together to develop aspects of the curriculum. Pupils are more involved and interested.</li> </ul>
7) Introduction of SNAG	School establishes a Student Nutrition Action Group to investigate & monitor all aspects of lunches	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. SNAG is formed with 10 pupils</li> <li>ii. SNAG reviews menus and suggests changes</li> <li>iii. SNAG begins to canvas pupil opinion concerning menus through questionnaires/class surveys.</li> </ul>
8) Input into School Newsletters and Governor Meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Pupils start to write parts of School Newsletter</li> <li>b) Pupils provide reports to Govs.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Some pupils wrote an article on the African Day for the January Newsletter.</li> <li>ii. Additional articles are provided by pupils.</li> <li>iii. Pupils write reports on pupil activities for the Full Governing Body Meeting.</li> </ul>
9) Review of Annual Pupil Questionnaire	PARs suggested review of the Annual Pupil Questionnaire for younger pupils	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. The PARs suggested that the Annual Pupil Questionnaire was perhaps not suitable for the younger ones as it was too complicated.</li> <li>ii. PARs considered other ways to ask questions for the younger ones and settled for smiley faces. They shared their ideas with HT who then helped draw up new questionnaire.</li> <li>iii. Infant Pupils now complete the Annual Infant Questionnaire (see Appendix 6).</li> </ul>



10) Leaflet for Refugee Week	Y5 Pupils As Researchers worked with Mrs. Whitton and worker from EMTAS (Ethnic Minority and Traveller Achievement Service)	<p>i. Y5 PARs took part in a training session with Team Leader from EMTAS and HT to understand issues surrounding Asylum Seekers and Refugees.</p> <p>ii. Pupils worked with HT to develop A4 booklet entitled “Asylum Seekers and Refugees: The Truth” which was printed in full colour and distributed around Durham, with copies given out during Refugee Week and a supply in the central library. Copies were also given to all pupils in school to share with their parents.</p> <p>iii. All pupils within school used the leaflet as a basis for a Family Group session to increase awareness of this issue within school.</p>
11) Letters to Businesses re Prizes for Christmas and Summer Fairs	Pupils in Y6 wrote to local businesses asking for donations of prizes for our Christmas and Summer Fairs	<p>i. Staff suggested to the PTA that the Y6 pupils could write to businesses asking for donations of prizes for the Fairs.</p> <p>ii. Pupils wrote as part of their English work – each pupil targeting a different business for which they had to find address, name of person to write to etc.</p> <p>iii. The response was very positive and at Christmas included a star prize of a stay for two at a local Marriott hotel. Other prizes included a guided tour of premier division football club and a pamper day. Similar high quality prizes were offered for the summer fair (i.e. 3 month membership of a local Health Club – value £237)</p>
12) Pupils wrote to local businesses asking for sponsorship for new rugby strip.	Pupils taking part in a new Rugby Club at school wrote to targeted businesses asking for sponsorship.	<p>i. Parent Volunteer who is running the new club wanted proper strips for club.</p> <p>ii. HT suggested pupils wrote to businesses.</p> <p>iii. Volunteer drew up list of most likely businesses.</p> <p>iv. Pupils wrote – awaiting response.</p>

#### **i. Existing Practices**

Clearly some activities have continued on from previous years and have continued to develop. These include:

- Enterprise Work – extended to include a full Enterprise week for Y6 pupils and enterprise training for Y5 (as well as Y3 and Y4 as last year).

- Anti-bullying Work – continuing as before but extended to include a group of Y4 pupils who work in the Infant Yard, supporting games.
- Pupils as Researchers – they have been responsible for making decisions about the new school building and in involving the rest of the school in this
- Sports Leaders – continue to help run Mini-Olympics.

From these, the input the PARs had was probably the most significant. The school was moving into extensively refurbished premises (total cost of £1.6 million, including an extension) which required new signage, new corridors and cloakroom space. The PARs had a significant input into the design of the cloakrooms, including surveying the whole school as to which colour of pegs each class wanted. They also designed the display space in every corridor, selecting to create 'Art Galleries' by putting large frames up throughout which has since been filled with art work produced by the pupils in 'Arts Week'. (The Galleries were opened by the mayor). Not only did they select the frames to be put up, all 76 of them, they also organised the layout and spacing – deciding which frame to put where.

The PARs also had a major input into the designs for the new signs, presenting their ideas to the graphic designer from the sign company and then working with him, listening to his suggestions and modifying their designs to ensure the finished signs were stunning.

## **ii. Practice Building from Pilot Work**

The following activities developed from pilot work the previous year:

- Staff continued to actively seek feedback from pupils regarding teaching and learning
- Pupils have had significant input into their topic work

Staff shared their strategies at a staff meeting and as a consequence extended the range of ways they collected input from pupils to include more searching questions ie "If I taught this lesson again, what could I do differently?", "What helped you learn best?" and "Which lesson have you learned most from this week?". Teachers also began to adapt their lessons according to the feedback they received, with some embracing this notion and finding it a useful way of improving their teaching and learning.

All staff began to plan based on the ideas provided by the children. They introduced the topic or theme and then invited children to identify what aspects they wanted to learn about, posing questions and suggesting methods for learning. This started off gradually the first term, but soon took off as staff saw the benefits – that pupils became more interested and motivated. Staff also said that the pupils came up with interesting ideas – often including ones they had not thought of themselves.

### **iii. New Initiatives**

- SNAG (Student Nutrition Action Group) has been established and has a significant input into school meals now.
- Pupils are beginning to have an input into our school newsletters and are planning to write reports of pupil actions for Governors.
- PARs identified that our Annual Pupil Questionnaire was not user-friendly for our younger pupils and have helped develop a questionnaire for Infants.
- PARs produced a leaflet used throughout the County as part of Refugee Week. Leaflet also sent home to all parents.
- Pupils in Y6 supported PTA by writing to local businesses asking for donations of prizes for school fairs.
- Pupils wrote asking local businesses to sponsor their strip for the newly formed rugby team.

Whilst all of the above provided a valuable contribution to our school, it is worth noting that SNAG has had a significant input into school meals. Pupils have reviewed and modified the menus, having first consulted with the school community using surveys and questionnaires. The SNAG meetings involve the cook, some parents, myself, the catering manager and 9 Y5 and Y6 pupils.

The PARs worked with a member of EMTAS (Ethnic Minorities and Travellers Service) on developing a leaflet which would explain the difference between refugees and asylum seekers, clarifying misconceptions and aiming to reduce prejudice. Their target audience was pupils but the finished leaflet was so good I sent it (in colour) to all families in school. It was distributed around Durham as part of Refugee Week. (One of our pupils also produced the art work for the banner used that week).

Finally, the most noteworthy activity of all was when the PARs came to me stating that they thought the Annual Pupil Questionnaire was not really suitable for Infants as it was too complicated. The questionnaire was amended (by them, working with me) as a result of this (see Appendix 6, p272).

#### **iv. Summary of Activities (2010)**

Pupil involvement in school activities has continued to increase over the last year. The most notable differences have been that pupils input into their teaching and learning is now embedded throughout the school, both in terms of the curriculum and in feedback into teaching and learning. Pupils have also been involved in some aspects of the new building, but in a way that has avoided ‘tokenism’ whilst SNAG makes a valuable contribution to lunchtimes. Pupils are also becoming involved in a range of activities that is helping other groups (i.e. Refugee leaflet) and the PTA (fair prizes) as well as taking responsibility for obtaining new sports strips (i.e. rugby strips and cheerleading outfits). Their involvement in school has moved beyond working with adults, under the direction of adults, or in response to suggestions by adults to identifying areas themselves which they have set about improving (i.e. the Pupil Questionnaire). To summarise, pupil voice activities are now evident throughout school, including both those falling within the ‘Classroom Input’ and those with ‘General Input’. Whilst many are still initiated by adults, some are now initiated by children themselves.

### **h. Third Year Interviews and Questionnaires**

#### **i. Staff Interviews (2010)**

I interviewed staff, six non-teachers and seven teachers, for the last time in May 2010, towards the end of the final year of research. The semi-structured interview questions were adapted to take account of changes that had occurred over the three year research period and it was also necessary to differentiate slightly between those questions given to teachers and those given to non-teaching staff due to differences in their jobs. A copy of both sets of questions is given in Appendix 2 and within these, staff were asked to review the impact pupil voice has had requesting examples of those which have produced the greatest and least impact. The 2010 questionnaire also asked staff to assess how much they thought pupil voice activities had increased over the last three years, thus replacing the

question which asked staff to rate themselves according to how much say they should have in school.

### a) Teacher Interviews (2010)

A copy of the transcripts for the teacher interviews is given in Appendix 3 and a brief summary of the responses they gave is included below in Table 10:

**Table 10: Summary of Teacher Responses at the End of the Final Year**

SW	Thinking about the input pupils have into aspects of our school, how much would you say this has increased over the last 3 years? (1 - not much; 6 – a great deal)
TS	4 x 1                                      4/5 x 2 5 x 3                                      6 x 1
SW	Which changes for you have had the biggest impact in your class?
TS	School Council having 1 temp and 1 permanent member x 1 PARs x 3 Rights Respecting x 2 Enterprise Group x 1 Creative Curriculum x 3 SNAG x 1 Class Monitors x 1
SW	Which changes have had the biggest impact around the school?
TS	Creative Curriculum x 3                                      Pupils taking part more in decisions x 4 Rights Respecting x 1                                      SNAG x 1 AfL (Assessment for Learning) x 1
SW	Why has that had such a big impact?
TS	Staff are willing to make that change and adapt their teaching because they see it works because the children are more motivated x 2 Because the children can feel involved and see what they are doing is having an impact, its coming from the children x 6
SW	What changes for you have had the <b>least</b> impact for you and your class?
TS	Nothing x 2 Nothing, but I feel some activities are more suited to older pupils (PARs, SNAG) x 3 PARs because it is more for older children x 1 Possibly School Council because of reduced meetings (due to staff illness) and the fact that other groups ie PARs & SNAG have taken some of their work x 1
SW	What's the <b>best</b> change that pupil voice has brought about?
TS	Children developing their skills/becoming more involved/being listened to x 5 Children feeding their ideas into the curriculum x 1 Creative curriculum/how my teaching has changed to respond to their ideas etc x 2
SW	Are there any changes you would have preferred hadn't happened because of pupil voice?

TS	No x 4                      No because it was a gradual growth not a sudden bang x 1 Nothing but I feel PARs could be developed a bit more so as not to be so time-consuming x1 Initially I felt a worried I would lose control but this has not been the case so no x 1
SW	In your opinion, do you think the development of pupil voice has had an impact on your own teaching and learning in school – positively or negatively?
TS	4 x 1                      4/5 x 1                      5 x 3                      6 x 2
SW	So, in your opinion, do you think the development of pupil voice has had an impact on the curriculum – either positively or negatively?
TS	4/5 x 2                      5 x 2                      6 x 3
SW	Why?
TS	It's giving them responsibility for their learning and developing skills in pupils x 3 Positive impact of creative curriculum x 2 It has broadened my teaching as 1 respond to their ideas x 2 It makes teaching and learning more interesting x 1
SW	Well, thank you very much – thank you.

TS – Teacher Summary

Teachers had different ideas about what, for them, had the biggest impact in their class, with the most frequent responses including the PARs and the Creative Curriculum. These included aspects involved in General Input (i.e. PARs and Enterprise projects) as well as Class Input (input into teaching and learning and the curriculum) with the following response focussing on teaching and learning:

“I think the creative curriculum – certainly getting the children to have a lead in what is being taught has helped with planning and also to get them involved in the learning.” (T5, 2010)

This thought was repeated in the following comment:

“..you know when you start a new topic and introduce it and they say what they'd like to cover and I *know* from my class that they really appreciated that. They like the fact that they can cover the stuff they want to cover and it's good for me as well because there are some things that I might not think of covering or doing it in a certain way that they come up with and that fits in really well” (T6, 2010)

More than half the teachers interviewed at this point believed that the biggest impact pupil voice had within the school was that pupils were taking more part in

the decision making process than ever before and a typical response offered was this one:

“I think just the fact that they’re all taking part and they’re getting asked their opinion about things. It’s the fact that their opinions are being asked. Sometimes you can’t do anything about it but other times you can say you’ve taken on board their opinions.” (T3, 2010)

Most teachers could not think of an area that had not had an impact within school, giving no response to the question about ‘least impact’. Those who did give a reply noted that the PARs had not had much impact for them personally because it involved mainly older pupils. The other response related to the School Council.

Staff felt that pupil voice activities had had a significant impact on their own teaching and learning with the lowest response being a 4. A similar response was given when asked about the impact it had had on the curriculum – this time the lowest response was 4/5.

### **b) Non-teaching Interviews (2010)**

The transcripts for the interviews with the non-teaching staff is given in Appendix 4 and a summary of their responses is given in Table 11 below. Non-teaching staff were also asked which change had the biggest impact and their responses stated that it was the growth in lots of pupil groups, involved in a variety of activities (i.e. SNAG, Mediators, PARs etc.). They said that this encouraged and allowed pupils

**Table 11: Summary of Non-teacher Responses at the End of the Final Year**

SW	Thinking about the input pupils have into aspects of our school, how much would you say this has increased over the last 3 years?
NTS	4 x 2 5 x 4
SW	Why do you think this?
NTS	Lots of groups of pupils involved x 1 PARs and other groups have become involved in lots of decisions/more proactive x 4
SW	What changes do you think have had the biggest impact?
NTS	Pupils have the opportunity to voice their opinions on school matters x 1 SNAG, Mediators and PARs all help make decisions and are involved x 4 Pupils choosing some of the topic work x 1

SW	And why do you think this?
NTS	The PARs and SNAG do a great job of involving pupils throughout the school x 3 Being involved they have more ownership of decisions x 2 When pupils help choose it gives things more meaning to them x 1
SW	What changes do you think have had the least impact – I mean do you think there is anything we do now that hasn't had an impact?
NTS	Maybe School Council because a lot of what they did is now done by PARs/SNAG x 3 Don't know if there's anything x 2 Don't know – not class based x 1
SW	What's the best change that pupil voice has brought about?
NTS	PARs and their input into school issues x 4 They are more aware of world issues x 1 PARs and SNAG x 1
SW	Are there any changes that we've done that you would have preferred hadn't happened?
NTS	No x 2 No but sometimes the questionnaires are a bit long for the younger ones x 3 No but I don't think they should be involved in staff appointments x 1
SW	In your opinion, do you think the development of pupil voice has had an impact on your own role within school – either positively or negatively?
NTS	3 x 1 (non class based) (1 = negative, 3 = none, 6 = a great deal) 4 x 4 5 x 0 6 x 1
SW	In your opinion, do you think the development of pupil voice has had an impact on the curriculum – either your own positively or negatively?
NTS	4 x 2 5 x 1 6 x 2 I don't know, I'm not class based x 1
SW	That's great – well thank you very much.

NTS – Non-teacher Summary Responses

to voice their opinions in school. These were all aspects falling within 'General Input' and only one of the six non-teachers mentioned anything relating to Classroom Input – in this case pupils having an input into their topic work.

When asked which activities had the least impact, answers were fairly similar to the teaching staff, with half the responses saying 'none', whilst three mentioned the School Council as they felt that their role had been superseded by other groups such as PARs, SNAG etc.



Non-teaching staff were asked about the impact pupil voice activities had to their own roles within school, and to the curriculum, and all responded positively except for the one member of staff who was not class-based, and who remained neutral.

### **c) Staff Interview Summary (2010)**

When asked if there were any activities that had occurred which they would have preferred hadn't, both teaching and non-teaching staff mentioned that they felt the PARs could perhaps carry out their class surveys in a more efficient, slightly less disruptive way. Both groups felt that pupils had more impact on school activities and appreciated that this was a good thing as pupils now felt more ownership of what was going on.

When asked to determine how much pupil voice has increased over the last three years, rating responses on a scale of 1 to 6 with '1' indicating there had been no change at all whilst '6' indicates there has been a great deal of change. Staff responded as follows:

**Table 12: Staff Ratings for Pupil Involvement, Summer 2009**

	Teacher Responses		Non-teacher Responses		Combined Responses	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
4	1	14%	2	33%	3	23%
4/5	2	29%	0	0	2	15%
5	3	43%	4	67%	7	54%
6	1	14%	0	0	1	8%

As can be seen, all staff considered that pupil voice has an impact on school, with the minimum rating being '4' and over half of all staff rating this as a '5'. Some staff also commented that the reason they had not given a higher rating to the impact question was that they felt we could offer more opportunities to the younger pupils. For example, this response was given by a teacher who rated this 5:

"It seems to be the older children and I know it's much more difficult to get the younger children involved in things but I think there's a lot more opportunities for the older children to have their say and their input than the younger children but I think that's somewhere we need to focus next"

(T1, 2010)

Another teacher who rated this '5' echoed this by saying:

"I would say 5 definitely – a lot of input with pupil voice these days. It still has a little way to go so that's the only reason I wouldn't give it a 6."



(T4, 2010)

From this it is clear that following three years of development, all staff believed that pupil voice had had a positive impact with the school, whilst at least some felt that there was still room for further development.

## **ii. Pupil Questionnaires (2010)**

As was discussed in the previous section (see p87) a group of pupils had decided that the Pupil Questionnaire was not suitable for the Infants and set about re-designing this. This resulted in two separate questionnaires being used in 2010 – a new Infant Pupil Questionnaire and the Junior Pupil Questionnaire which was broadly the same as the questionnaire used the previous year. Copies of both questionnaires are given in Appendix 6.

The PARs introduced the new Infant Questionnaire to Infant Classes, explaining how to fill it in. Pupils had the option of circling one of the following a yellow smiley

face  for 'yes', a straight line face  for 'don't know' and a red frown face for 'no'. Infant pupils found it easier to complete this questionnaire but having carried out the questionnaire, the PARs felt that it might be better to completely rewrite the questionnaire for next year for the Infants and focus on half a dozen or so basic questions which are relevant to their age. As one pupil said, "I'm not sure they really understood some of the questions but they wanted to give answers to all the questions" (PAR feedback from 2010 Infant Questionnaire). Generally the Infant pupils gave more positive responses to the questions than the Junior pupils. In order to make a reasonable comparison of results with previous years, I have combined the results and included them in Table 13 overleaf.

Whilst the results from the 2010 questionnaire show a decline from the previous year they show a significant increase from 2008, with the exception of (Q1) and (Q8) which are broadly similar, with results affected by a high percentage of pupils either not responding or indicating 'don't know' (Q1 = 14% and Q8 = 5%).

**Table 13: Comparison of Pupil Questionnaire Results 2008, 2009 and 2010**

	2008			2009			2010		
	Always OR Nearly Always	Some- times	Never	Always OR Nearly Always	Some- times	Never	Always OR Nearly Always	Some- times	Never
<b>Feeling Included</b>									
1) I feel my views count in this class	65%	29%	7%	87%	11%	2%	61%	17%	8%
2) I feel I'm important in this school	53%	28%	19%	70%	21%	8%	62%	21%	14%
3) I feel my views count in this school	52%	38%	10%	74%	20%	6%	55%	21%	12%
<b>Feeling In Control</b>									
4) I learn things which are interesting	67%	29%	4%	85%	10%	2%	73%	16%	8%
5) If there was something I wanted to learn about I think my teacher would try and teach it	60%	26%	10%	79%	16%	4%	66%	16%	12%
6) I think pupils in this school help make some of the decisions	55%	34%	8%	78%	19%	2%	60%	21%	13%
7) I think the School Council helps pupils to get things done in school	51%	28%	17%	66%	25%	8%	60%	19%	10%
<b>Feeling Confident</b>									
8) I feel I do well at this school	76%	19%	4%	86%	11%	3%	74%	16%	5%
9) Teachers at this school like me	68%	24%	6%	86%	11%	3%	81%	12%	3%

N.B. Please note that question numbers used above are for the purposes of identification within this table and may not agree with numbering used within the questionnaires in 2008, 2009 and 2010.

Given the curricular changes that took place in 2009-2010 this may seem surprising and reasons for this will be explored in the next chapter, 'Discussion of Findings'.

An analysis of the number of pupils involved in pupil voice activities produced the results set out in Table 14 below:

**Table 14: Number Involved in Pupil Voice Activities 2010**

Class	No. in Class	No. Involved in PV Activity	%
Reception	23	11	48%
Year 1	19	2	11%
Year 2	20	20	100%
Total for Infants	62	33	53%
Year 3/4	30	19	63%
Year 4/5	30	27	90%
Year 6	24	22	92%
Total for Juniors	84	68	81%
Overall Totals	146	101	69%

Year 1 shows the lowest participation rate – considerably lower than the percentage of pupils involved in Reception – however this increases again significantly in Year 2 where all pupils are involved. A comparison table has been drawn up to show participation rates for the whole school throughout the research period and this is given as Table 15 below:

**Table 15: Comparison of % Pupils Involved in 2008, 2009 & 2010**

Year	INFANTS	JUNIORS	TOTAL
<b>2008</b>	9%	44%	29%
<b>2009</b>	48%	73%	64%
<b>2010</b>	53%	81%	69%

By the summer term 2010, more than two-thirds of pupils throughout the school were engaged in some form of pupil voice activity. It should be noted that the activities included in these tables exclude pupil input into Teaching and Learning and the Curriculum, as to include these areas would result in an increase to 100% throughout the school, which would perhaps eliminate the ability to make a useful comparison of pupil involvement in all other aspects of school life.

### iii. Parent Questionnaires (2010)

Our Annual Parent Questionnaire was carried out in May 2010 using the same format as the previous year, with the exception of Q13 which changed from “*I think that the building plans for the school are a good thing*” in 2009 to “*I am happy that we will be moving into the ‘new’ building in September*” in 2010. We received only 29 responses, approximately an 19% return – 4% less than the previous year but 3% more than in 2008.

**Table 16: Comparison of Parent Questionnaire Results 2008, 2009 & 2010**

	2008			2009			2010		
% Return	16%			23%			19%		
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree
<b>Q7</b>	23%	50%	4%	34%	58%	5%	38%	52%	0%
	73%			92%			90%		
<b>Q12</b>	15%	50%	8%	21%	50%	5%	35%	48%	7%
	65%			71%			83%		

**N.B. Table omits ‘Don’t Know’ responses**

Table 16 above compares the results from those questions relating to pupil voice activities in the 2010 Parent Questionnaire with those of 2008 and 2009. Whilst there were more ‘don’t know’ responses for Q7 (“*the school encourages children to get involved in more than just daily lessons*”) than in 2009, this question achieved its strongest support in 2010 as well as no negative responses. Interestingly, Q12 “*The school takes account of children’s views*” provided two negative responses in 2010 (7%) whilst also provided the most positive returns with 35% of parents strongly agreeing.

We also asked parents about their views on the various pupil voice groups we have within school as one of four open questions included in the questionnaire. From the thirteen written responses, 3 were comments unrelated to pupil voice, one parent felt their own child (age 5) was too young for this but that pupil voice activities were a good thing or older children, 6 were very supportive of the concept and the remaining 3 all felt that whilst children should be involved in school decisions, this should not be taken too far – as one parent wrote:

“I feel it’s important their views are heard and considered. However, pupil’ opinions should be just one fraction of the information used to develop new teaching ideas as *‘teachers know best’* !”

(Parental Response, APQ 2010)

Within the other three open questions, parents commented about children developing good self-esteem, high levels of self-confidence, along with understanding the need to show consideration for others. It should perhaps also be noted that when parents were asked for ways in which the school could be improved, no-one made any comments opposed to pupil voice activities.

#### **iv. Summary of Activities (2010)**

At the end of the research period members of the school community were able to indicate a variety of ways in which pupil voice activities had benefited the school. All groups were also given the opportunity to indicate ways in which pupil voice had, or may have, a detrimental effect and responses here were minimal. Staff could see the advantage pupil voice activities had brought, both to the organisation and running of the school and to pupils themselves in terms of increased self-esteem and motivation. Teachers were also able to identify ways in which pupil input had helped improve their own performance in terms of teaching and learning and curriculum content. Pupil responses showed that the majority of children felt that the school always, or nearly always, took account of their views, they believed teachers tried to teach what they wanted to learn and that they felt valued by school. When adding in the percentage that thought this was sometimes the case, this rises to nearly all pupils. Whilst the figures in the 2010 Questionnaire were less than the very high scores in 2009, they nearly all showed a good increase from 2008. All pupils have been involved in some form of pupil input into school life if we include Teaching and Learning and the Curriculum – without these aspects the percentage of pupils involvement continues to rise to 69% overall, a 40% increase from 2008. Parental views showed a continued increase to the ‘strongly agree’ response to both of the closed questions relating to pupil voice. Parents gave favourable responses to the open question, the only note of caution indicated by three of them was that pupil opinion should be balanced by other views and not taken as the only contributing factor. It should be noted that whilst parents did not mention any problems occurring as a result of pupil voice, they did clearly point to the benefits this brought about.

## CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The following chapter revisits the main findings outlined in Chapter 4 and discusses these in some detail, exploring issues raised and linking these with relevant research. The information included within this chapter is presented in the following sub-headings:

- Initial Responses
- Preparing the Way
- Measuring Impact
- First Year Activities
- First Year Questionnaires
- Second Year Activities
- Second Year Interviews and Questionnaires
- Third Year Activities
- Third Year Interviews and Questionnaires
- External Assessments

### **a. Initial Response**

In their book “Consulting Pupils: What’s in it for Schools?” Flutter and Rudduck (2004) point out that for most children, their school experience is quite at odds with the rest of their youth, saying that the differences:

*“can give young people the impression that school is a ‘world apart’ and therefore what happens in the classroom is seen, to some extent, as irrelevant.”*  
(ibid, p132)

The extent to which such a statement is true, i.e. that the classroom may seem ‘irrelevant’ may well depend on a host of factors such as location, social and economic factors, percentage of pupils who may have parents who have attended some form of higher education and the like. Nevertheless, I would agree that many pupils’ experience of school is significantly different from any other organisation or setting they may attend, particularly when you consider the amount of ‘free choice’

that may be exercised. For the main part, pupils attend school (without choice, arguably for their own good), follow a curriculum for which they may have varying degrees of interest, and conform to a timetable which is imposed upon them. Most are required to exercise outside (sometimes regardless of weather), swim and engage in a range of activities for which they may have no interest. Whilst most of us would recognise that as something akin to our own school experience and many even feel there is nothing wrong with such an approach, you would only have to consider imposing similar conditions onto adults (consider outdoor PE in the rain in thin top and shorts...) to see how unacceptable this would be.

For many pupils there is very little degree of choice involved in many aspects of their school experience and it could be argued that at a very basic level, pupil voice is all about changing this, or as Nixon et. al. (1996) say,

*“fostering dialogue at the classroom level, enabling the pupil’s voice to be heard and valued (as it has) the potential not only to improve relationships but to enhance the learning and achievement...”* (ibid, p272)

This would help ensure pupils have at least some degree of choice or involvement in what they do, but for this to happen staff would have to see the need and identify the benefits so they allow change to develop otherwise any such amendments may be tokenistic and have little real impact on the climate of the school. For this reason, the start of my research involved determining the attitudes and perceptions of staff, beginning with asking them to identify the possible benefits and disadvantages that pupil voice could bring.

#### **i. Possible Advantages**

At the beginning of the research period all staff, teaching and non-teaching, could identify some key factors within pupil voice that might help improve outcomes for pupils, namely motivation, empowerment, raised self-esteem, improved relationships as well as providing a different perspective for pupils. In brief, most staff thought that if pupils took more of an interest in their school experience and were more involved in this, then this in turn may lead to an increase in standards, as suggested by Nixon (1996) above. Non-teaching staff also considered that by increasing the involvement of pupils you may find out more about how they learn



and what suits them best - this too may help to raise standards. It was clear from the outset that staff did understand what the potential benefits could be and were ready to say so. The importance of the receptiveness of staff should not be underestimated as without their open-minded attitude and willingness to embrace the concept of pupil voice the project would have been much less likely to succeed.

From this initial starting point it was then important to assess the extent to which staff believed that pupils could have an input into aspects of school life. In order to determine this, each staff member was asked to identify which elements of school life they thought pupils could be consulted on. From the responses previously given as Table 1 it can be seen that the only unanimous replies given in the 2007 interviews were those involving the School Council, Anti-bullying Committee and issues concerning the Outdoor Environment where all participants felt that pupils should be involved. These would all fall within the category 'General Input' and pupils were already involved, to some extent, in all three. There was an active School Council, pupils had some input into our Anti-bullying work and the recently formed Pupils As Researchers had been involved in looking at aspects of the outdoor environment. The majority of staff, although not all, felt that pupils could be involved in the classroom layout and teachers believed that pupils could have an input into the Governing Body – not a view shared by the non-teaching staff who felt a lot more reticent about this. The transcripts of all the interviews are given in Appendix 3 (teachers) and Appendix 4 (non-teachers).

Looking ahead, most staff predicted that pupils would become more involved in aspects of their school experience, including teaching and learning and the curriculum – despite reservations that some of them held. However it is unclear whether they were predicting this because they thought it would be a good thing for pupils or whether it was because they thought they would be coerced down that road due to my interests as head teacher. Although I could have probed this further in an attempt to tease out the reasons behind their responses I chose not to do so for two reasons. Firstly, even if I did ask staff why they thought this, they may not have answered honestly. Secondly, by raising the issue I may have offended some staff who might not previously have thought of this and in turn they then might feel they were expected to behave more in line with the expectations of

the head teacher if they had not previously acted in this way. On considering the possibilities, as I could not guarantee a more accurate answer than that which I had started with, and as there was the potential to upset individuals or skew future results, I decided it was better not to pose the question in the first place.

To summarise, whilst all staff could identify ways in which the development of pupil voice could produce benefits to pupils, these were all related to 'General Input'. Although many staff could predict that pupil voice activities may extend to issues such as the curriculum or teaching and learning, this was by no means unanimous and it is impossible to determine why staff thought this would happen. Throughout the research period staff demonstrated a willingness to embrace the notion of pupil voice and this helped ensure the project's likelihood of success.

## **ii. Possible Disadvantages**

The attitudes and concerns of staff toward the concept of pupil voice at the outset of the research period were similar to those raised in other research covering this area. One of the major concerns raised by staff, both teaching and non-teaching, that pupils may take advantage if they are given more say, is relatively common throughout research into pupil voice. For example, in the IPil project, MacBeath et. al. (2008) discuss the concerns of staff in some detail, stating:

*"There is no doubt that some teachers regard empowerment of pupils as a threat to their own authority and position as leader of learning. The boundary that defines what is the responsibility of the teacher and that of the pupil begins to become blurred as we develop more participative strategies."*

(MacBeath et. al. (2008) pp33-34)

and this raises the issue of power within school. Pollock's review of teacher-pupil relationships in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries concluded with this statement:

*"In the past, there was less listening to children...Education was conceived of as a passive process: the instructor imparted and the children absorbed the lessons."*

(Pollock (1996) p28)

presenting the image of schools whereby pupils only speak when spoken to. This supports the notion of the teacher being the dominant force within the classroom

with pupils taking on a much more submissive role - a notion that may not have altered much in some schools, despite the changing climate surrounding children's rights (i.e. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989)).

Issues of power can be related to those of discipline and some people may suspect that it is the more confident members of staff with good discipline that will be more open to the notion of sharing their 'power' with pupils whilst perhaps the weaker or less-experienced members of staff who struggle with discipline at times may feel more intimidated or threatened by this. Indeed, McIntyre in Arnot et. al. (2004) goes as far as to suggest this when he says:

*"Teachers interested in consultation strategies, but lacking experience, will need support from their school and the courage to face and learn from what can sometimes be uncomfortable knowledge."* (ibid. p89)

However, I offer no firm evidence to support such a hypothesis and suspect the issue is more complex than this. When asked about possible disadvantages relating to pupil voice, one teacher in my study said, perhaps with some insight:

*"...it depends on what sort of teacher you are – whether you can accept it or not. Whether you can involve the children with the decision making. Because if you want to hold on to everything, just giving them that freedom to, to put their point of view and actually take part and suggest things to do, that could really threaten you."* (T3, 2007)

Determining which type of staff would be more open to the notion of pupil voice could provide an interesting investigation in itself, and one possible approach to this would be to develop a questionnaire around attitudes towards pupil voice (perhaps similar to the 2007 Questionnaire in Appendix 2) and give this to a sample of teachers, perhaps  $n = 90$ , of which 30 are within the first 2 years of teaching, 30 have been teaching 3 – 5 years and 30 teaching 6 years plus. The overall group could be subdivided further by carrying out a confidence rating, for example Bandura (1977, 1997) or Tschannen-Moran & Hoy (2001). This would enable results to be analysed in 2 ways: firstly in an attempt to determine whether there was a link between experience and attitude to pupil voice, and secondly to determine whether there was a link between confidence and pupil voice. (A further

activity may be to determine whether there was a link between confidence and experience.) However, whilst such a study may prove interesting, it is unfortunately beyond the scope of this investigation.

From their comments relating to empowerment, MacBeath et. al. (2008) offer what they call a 'salient message' to be learned from their observations, saying:

*“Senior and middle leaders need to focus on the culture building and staff development that support the growth of a more participative approach to the relationship between teachers and pupils.”* (ibid (2008) p33)

My findings support this viewpoint. I had carefully planned my approach to the development of pupil voice within school, having read quite extensively in order to identify potential problems as well as things that had led to positive outcomes in other schools [see Rudduck & McIntyre (2007, pp183 – 91); Flutter & Rudduck (2004, pp22 – 26); Davie & Galloway (1996, pp139 – 142) and Arnot et. al. (2004)]. It is also worth noting that the growth of pupil voice has occurred during a time when schools are under tremendous pressure and held to account for virtually every aspect of their performance by organisations such as the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted). This made it all the more important that staff should see the benefits of pupil voice, particularly as we were all working to improve our school from the Ofsted grading 'Satisfactory' to 'Good'. However, a review of the initial responses demonstrated that all staff could identify some potential benefits and I was careful to take account of staff views and attitudes whilst setting the scene. In addition, I attempted to lead by example in a way which presented positive outcomes whilst trying not to take staff too far out of their comfort zone, and to carefully pace the rate of change, allowing staff to become comfortable with some aspects, starting mainly with those identified positively by them during the first round of interviews, before pushing the boundaries. This called for me to listen and be overtly responsive to staff views as I wanted to avoid the problem of staff feeling as if they had less rights than pupils, an issue identified by Whitty and Wisby (2007) in their research into pupil voice for the DfES. They looked at fifteen schools and reported that:

*“some of the teachers (we) spoke to certainly felt it was ironic that in ‘their’ schools, pupils were being offered more say in decision-making than they had as teachers.”* (ibid, (2007) p316)

However, this was not the only reason I needed to get staff on side and elicit their support, for as Fielding (2001) so aptly put it, the

*“development of student voice at the expense or to the exclusion of teacher voice is a serious mistake. The latter is the necessary condition of the former: staff are unlikely to support developments that encourage positive ideals for students which thereby expose the poverty of their own participatory arrangements.”* (ibid, p106)

Throughout the project I felt that if I was expecting staff to listen to pupils, the least I could do was ensure I was listening to the staff themselves so they felt pupils were not the only ones whose views counted within our school. Obviously it is difficult for me to assess the extent to which staff actually believed this happened, however, in the final interviews with staff, one teacher said:

*“There’s nothing I can think of (that I wish hadn’t happened) no – because it’s all been, it’s all been good and the way it’s happened it’s not just been ‘bang’ it’s happened – there’s all these different things. Gradually we’ve built upon it so staff have really had a chance to take it on board and understand it and see the positives with it and the children have as well. It was small steps at first, but now.. you know, we’re doing it in so many ways it just feeds across the whole school.”* (T6, 2010)

This comment would seem to indicate that at least one participant felt that change had occurred gradually and in way that allowed staff to embrace the concept of pupil voice at a pace that suited them.

Looking more closely at the concerns staff may have regarding the development of pupil voice, one specific fear given by staff was ‘fear of criticism’. For example, when asked in 2007 about how they would feel about pupil feedback into teaching and learning, staff echoed some of the problems outlined by Flutter and Rudduck (2004, p23) giving the following responses as to why they might not be comfortable with that:

*“Criticism, you know.. fear of being criticised and then start questioning your own ability with teaching.”*  
(T5, 2007)

and

*“That’s got good and bad.. because if for some reason the child particularly disliked a teacher that could cause real problems.... like the present Year X class a couple of years ago, if they’d been giving feedback that could really have caused problems with one of our teachers, really demoralised her, so in that respect it could (cause problems).”*  
(T3, 2007)

This alludes to the fact that within school we had a cohort who, although bright with lots of personality, could be very demanding in that they constantly pushed the boundaries, challenging authority. It is a timely reminder that not all classes are the same, being made up with diverse groups of pupils with their own idiosyncrasies. Mostly classes ‘even out’ with more measured groups adding a calming influence into an otherwise uneasy mix. However, sometimes classes do not always ‘gel’ together and for whatever reason present a whole different range of challenges to those working with them. The class we had like this within school had been taught for a term, a couple of years ago, by a temporary teacher who experienced some difficulties with them. The teacher above (T3) was alluding to this and raising the issue about how such a class would handle or possibly take advantage of a less proficient teacher. Whilst I have no conclusive comment to make regarding this I can comment that the class she was referring to was still within our school for the duration of the research and took part in all aspects of pupil voice as it was developed throughout the school, including feedback into teaching and learning as well as input into the curriculum. It should also be noted that the three teachers working with this class during the research period are all considered to be very good or excellent teachers, well able to handle difficult classes, however this then leads us back to the relationship between a class and the *type of teacher* they have. As stated, this is really beyond the scope of my small scale research and it should be borne in mind that whilst these three teachers had a high level of success in developing pupil voice within their class, all three were also very open to developing pupil voice and after some of the typical

initial concerns, fully embraced this within both their classroom organisation and their teaching and learning methods.

Moving on, Rudduck and McIntyre (2007) also found no evidence that pupils take advantage of staff when they are asked to comment on their own teacher's teaching. For example, they said:

*"..we can report .. that pupils hardly ever – never, in our experience – take advantage of the opportunity of being consulted to make unpleasant personal remarks about the personality, appearance or foibles of their teacher in ways that are unrelated to their learning."* (ibid, p75)

However, whilst pupils may not take *advantage* when asked to comment on teaching, there is no avoiding the fact that pupils will say what they see – that is they will comment on possible weaknesses. Pedder and McIntyre (2004) reported on the general reactions of teaching staff to comments their pupils had made on their teaching as follows:

*"In general, the teachers' overall reactions to their pupils' comments were very positive, although they did vary, both in the degree of their enthusiasm and in what they focused on. Least impressed were two teachers who talked of 'no surprises', one of them indicating that the pupils had concentrated mainly on weaknesses in her teaching of which she was already aware. The other teachers all found things to be surprised and pleased about."* (in Arnot et. al. (2004) p20)

It was clear to me at the beginning of my research that if I was to encourage staff to engage in feedback from pupils concerning their teaching and learning that pupils may well identify some weaknesses in that teaching. In order to prepare for this I had considered the wide ranging ways in which pupil feedback could be obtained and when we first spoke about this as a staff, my initial examples started with simple feedback such as 'thumbs up/thumbs down' where pupils are asked to put their thumbs up if they feel a lesson has gone well and they have understood the concepts covered and 'thumbs down' if they've found it confusing or did not understand it all. I thought that if we started with 'small steps' it might enable staff

who may initially have had some doubts to try things out gradually in the hope that they would overcome any misgivings. It should also be noted that such strategies put teachers firmly in control – it was up to them to ask pupils to provide feedback and clearly if a lesson hadn't gone particularly well they didn't need to ask pupils to provide that feedback. This approach also meant, as we developed our ideas further and shared the methods we were using to gather pupils' views with one another, that staff could select those they were most comfortable with and focus on these. By the end of the three year research period all teachers engaged in feedback with pupils regarding their teaching and learning and felt at least relatively comfortable doing so. However it should also be noted that the biggest surge of activity here occurred after the staff meeting where teachers shared their methods with one-another, discussing what they did, what happened and what the outcome was. This was done with quite a lot of good humour and recounts tended to be fairly amusing – thus non-threatening. I couldn't have manufactured that event – it happened in the way described due to the personalities of those involved and I'm pleased to say the staff left feeling more positively towards this aspect and more willing to try new strategies they hadn't tried before than they had been when they came into the meeting. I've also felt fortunate to have a hard-working and good-natured staff, but I don't think I'd appreciated it quite as much as I did during the time we spent developing pupil voice within our school.

## **b. Preparing the Way**

As indicated before, I developed a group of Pupils As Researchers (PARs) within school prior to formally introducing the concept of pupil voice to the staff. I felt that if I were really committed to developing pupil voice within school I should find a better way of understanding how pupils viewed school. As Kellett (2005) so rightly put it:

*“the key to a better understanding of children is children themselves – as active researchers. Children ask different questions, have different priorities and concerns and see the world through different eyes. This important contribution to knowledge can only be made by children themselves.”*  
(ibid, (2005) p3)



One of my reasons for doing this was that it enabled staff to observe first hand some of the potential benefits, but more than this it also allowed staff to see how *our* pupils reacted to the development of pupil voice. The importance of this should not be overlooked as sometimes staff struggle with new initiatives when they can't see how these will work with *their* pupils. By showing the responsible way in which our pupils became effective PARs, the quality of input they had into our school community and how they readily worked with each class, i.e. drawing up and administering a questionnaire and then disseminating results clearly, staff could all see the skills and qualities developed by our pupils along with the benefits their work brought to our school.

### c. Measuring Impact

In order to provide some sort of measure against which to assess the progress of pupil voice over the next three years I assessed each activity in two ways.

**Table 17: Description of Elements from Hart's Ladder**

	Non- Participation	Degree of Participation	
1) Manipulation (or Deception)	√		Where adults consciously use children's voices to convey their own messages or deceive others as to the actual input or involvement of pupils on a project.
2) Decoration	√		Where children are seen to promote a cause but have not had the opportunity to explore or develop an understanding of the issues themselves.
3) Tokenism	√		Where children are involved in projects but have little or no choice about the subject matter, nor the opportunity to formulate their own opinions. The presence of children on panels or involvement at conferences can often be tokenistic but not always.
4) Assigned but Informed (Social Mobilization)		√	Whilst children may not have initiated a project, they may be fully informed about it and feel a sense of ownership. They may also have the opportunity to critically reflect on the issues.
5) Consulted not Informed		√	Whilst projects can be designed and run by adults the children understand the processes, are consulted so they have the chance to have an input and then have their opinions taken seriously.
6) Adult-initiated Shared Decisions with Children.		√	Where children are involved, to some degree, in the entire project (eg. not just in the design stages). Children should be consulted and any compromises/restrictions to original designs explained so they develop a fuller understanding.
7) Child-initiated and Child-Directed		√	Activities which are initiated by children and run by children without being controlled by adults.
8) Child-initiated Shared Decisions with Adults		√	Where activities are initiated by children, generally run by children but where children may seek adult support or advice in order to maximise the potential of the project or activity.

Firstly, against Hart's Ladder of Participation (1997, p41) as it provides a wide range of activities, from adult controlled to pupil initiated, which may be useful during the research period. To this end I have expanded on the initial descriptions originally given as Figure 1 and set these out above as Table 17. I have also included Flutter and Rudduck's 'Ladder of Participation' which has only five ratings, given before as Figure 2 (p21), and briefly they are:

- 0: Pupil not consulted (no element of pupil consultation)
  - 1: Listening to pupils (pupils are a source of data)
  - 2: Pupils as active participants (teachers lead but pupils take some role)
  - 3: Pupils as Researchers (pupils provide data & have an active role in decisions)
  - 4: Pupils as fully active participants & co-researchers (pupils & teachers work together)
- (from Flutter & Rudduck (2004) p16)

I have chosen to use both Ladders of Participation as I thought this would provide a greater degree of validity and so each activity will be rated, firstly against Hart's Ladder as H = 1 to 8, and then against Flutter and Rudduck's Ladder which will be given as FR = 0 to 4. If pupil voice activities become more embedded within the school, it is predicted that overall there will be more activities which score highly although pupil voice activities should not be considered solely as an incremental activity. Over the three year research period I will be looking to see not only whether there is an increase of activities but also if these activities include some which score more highly on both of the aforementioned Ladders of Participation.

#### **d. First Year Activities**

During the first year, five specific areas relating to pupil voice were tackled, as outlined previously in Table 2. Whilst this table offers a brief description of the change activity in each case and the result this change brought about, I will now look at each in turn against other pupil voice literature.

##### **i. Re-organisation of the School Council**

There has been much written about school councils in literature concerning pupil voice and citizenship (eg. Davies (2005)) and some of this points to the exclusive way many School Councils are created. For many schools, the formation of a

School Council provides an opportunity for pupils to participate in a form of ‘mini general election’ where pupils stand for election, prepare and present speeches and participate in a ballot. While this has certain advantages, for example enabling pupils to experience a democratic process first hand as advocated by Hart (1997, p3) it can be problematic. Firstly, it assumes pupils, or more importantly *most* pupils, have the same maturity of thought that adults may have – in that they can evaluate issues neutrally, in this case the speeches made by candidates, unclouded by issues such as friendship. Secondly, as Klein (2003) says,

*“..social inclusion in councils is a particularly important and problematic issue. Participation is tied up with many different factors, including self-esteem and self-image..”* (ibid, p38)

and it does seem that if we are not careful it can be yet another platform where bright, articulate and popular children are once more shown to be arguably bright, articulate and popular! This is not to say that such an approach is worthless – indeed for many schools the creation of a School Council was the first step towards providing a forum so that children’s opinions to be listened to. Moreover, a council made up of one elected member from each class can provide a useful starting point from which to build. For example, Peacock (2001) describes the steps her school took as it worked to develop a ‘community of learners’. On reviewing her School Council, which had been developed in just such a way, as part of a larger whole-school review of pupil voice activities, she found that:

*“On the whole the School Council received positive support throughout the school but there is clearly room for improvement and review.”* (ibid, p20)

Peacock later went on to develop her School Council in a very different way – to include all members of the school community, demonstrating that School Councils need not be restricted to one format. On reviewing my School Council I felt that it didn’t really represent our inclusive ethos within the school and I wanted it to expand, thus enabling more pupils to participate. Following consultation with staff and pupils we increased our School Council to include two members from each class – one elected as before whilst the other was chosen by the teacher and participated as a member for at least one meeting. In this way, many more pupils

have the opportunity to participate and yet the size of the Council is still manageable. However, the composition of the School Council is not the only issue – it is the content of what is discussed that can make a real difference to ensuring pupil voice is heard within schools. As Flutter and Rudduck (2004) found:

*“In many schools the school council role is limited to discussion of pupils’ concerns about facilities, uniforms and rules but there is evidence that schools are willing to adopt innovative approaches.”* (ibid, p18)

Prior to the start of research project the School Council was generally restricted to issues such as resource provision, fund raising and rules, echoing the findings of Flutter and Rudduck above, but over the course of the research period I was hoping to broaden the scope of the Council’s activities. In this first year however, the main concern was restructuring, which we achieved successfully.

**[H = 4]    [FR = 2]**

## **ii. Development of PARs Within School**

Although the launch of the Pupils as Researchers in the summer of 2007 had been very successful it did lack sustainability as all the pupils trained moved on to secondary school at the end of the summer. I felt that the skills developed by the pupils were lost to the school and so I decided to train PARs from two year groups – Year 5 and Year 6, so that when the Year 6 pupils moved on the Year 5 pupils could move up to Year 6 and help train the incoming Year 5s. This gave the added benefit of enabling pupils to be involved more fully in the training process and to take some responsibility for this. Initially this meant more work training a larger group of pupils, however the benefits would come the following year when pupils could help train one-another.

Having established the PARs, they then set about deciding on an area to investigate and following discussion they agreed on surveying the school to see if there was a need or desire for a school newspaper to be established. Within the questionnaire they drew up, they listed a whole range of newspaper features with possible structures and they used this questionnaire to survey the older pupils. One thing the pupils had learned from the previous PARs was that it was difficult for the youngest pupils to respond to complex questionnaires and so some time

was spent developing a way to enable them to gather responses from them. They did this by working in threes – one pupil to ask questions and maintain eye contact (which they realised was important), one to take notes and one to keep order and ensure the process went smoothly. The whole process took a few months from inception to completion and as always, the PARs were surprised by how long it took them to collate their results. At the end of the academic year, the PARs were asked to make presentations at two separate events – firstly the Y6 PARs led a workshop about their work at the 2008 Durham Pupil Voice Conference, which they did very successfully. Secondly the Y5 pupils presented a power point about their work at the Impetus Awards Ceremony in the Council Chambers at Durham County Council. The PARs decided that each year group would work towards one presentation each as they felt 11 pupils presenting all at once may be too many and they agreed that this way everyone would have a chance to make a more significant contribution.

At this point it is clear that the PARs were able to develop and carry out quite sophisticated research methods and by the end of their research they had set up and established a school newspaper with all the features identified within their survey, ensuring it represented what the school community wanted. However, neither subject matter so far - the investigation of outdoor play equipment and the establishment of a school newspaper – were issues which would impact greatly on our school curriculum or on teaching and learning. This was not a concern to me as the pupils were selecting their research topics themselves and their input into school was a positive one.

**[H = 6]     [FR = 3]**

### **iii. Pupils Trained as Young Sports Leaders**

At secondary school pupils can sometimes be involved in organising some of their sports events and the School Sports Partnership were trying to involve primary aged pupils in a similar way. They started by training our Year 5 pupils, demonstrating how to help lead and organise the Mini Olympics for local infant children. They were then shown how to organise the layout for the day, ensure each school knew where they needed to be sitting and how to do each event safely. During the day the Year 5 pupils, or Young Sports Leaders as they became known, undertook a variety of tasks including preparing groups for the activities,

leading children to the starting point, starting races, selecting winners, leading children back to their school groups and most difficult of all, ensuring pupils who were finished quickly were organised and occupied productively whilst they waited for the next event. The pupils did a great job and their organisational skills meant that the day ran very smoothly without the need for additional staff from the secondary school where the event was held. The skills the pupils developed are those described by Whitty and Wisby ((2007), p309) as the “*transferable life skills*” which fall under their category of ‘Active Citizenship’. The Young Sports Leaders were able to view the event from the perspective of the children and suggest minor improvements for the following year – thus ensuring that event became more tailored to the infants. They provided feedback on which events the infant had found a bit too difficult as well as an event that was not challenging enough and so finished too quickly. Following the event the pupils received a great deal of positive feedback from the other schools and a letter was sent to each parent expressing how proud our school was of their attitudes and behaviour (see Appendix 8). This resulted in some direct feedback from parents, one of whom wrote:

*“We appreciated you passing on to us the positive feedback on the children’s role yesterday. I was really impressed to hear of their organisational skills – it just shows what children are capable of given some enablement and an opportunity.”* (from parent letter, 6<sup>th</sup> July 2008)

Throughout our work on pupil voice I have tried to keep the whole school community informed about the activities the children are involved in, together with the benefits these bring and I have received many comments from parents like the one above. It is worth remembering that it’s not only our staff whom we need to show what our young people are capable of – very often parents can underestimate the skills and qualities possessed by their own children.

The Young Sports Leaders was a pilot event that has subsequently been continued each year with some of the pupils’ suggested modifications built in, thereby enhancing the activity for infants whilst increasing their own feeling of self-esteem. This activity would satisfy what Fielding and Rudduck (2002) call ‘the personal dimension’ which is one of four features that they believe consultation with pupils can help develop. They say that this consultation can offer:

*“A stronger sense of respect and self-worth (the personal dimension) so that students feel positive about themselves.”* (ibid, p6)

and it is clear that the Young Sports Leaders felt a huge sense of achievement through their involvement in this event. As most were going to transfer to this secondary school at the end of Year 6 and subsequently work with some of the PE staff who had trained them, this had the added benefit of reassuring them that secondary teachers were approachable, professional members of staff.

Not all activities developed over the three years have required that pupils feed back directly into our own school – some, like this one with the Young Sports Leaders involves pupils working, sometimes alongside adults and sometimes on their own, to develop a deeper understanding as to what will work best in a given situation and then for them to feed this back to the appropriate group. This is still very much a form of participation.

**[H = 5]    [FR = 2]**

#### **iv. Pupil Involvement in School Travel Plan**

Our school was reviewing its School Travel Plan in 2007-2008 and one of the most worrying issues facing us was the amount of cars parking around the entrance to the school at the beginning and end of the school days. As a school we had tried various strategies including letters, leaflets and trying to encourage the traffic police to make more regular drive-bys. Nevertheless the problem remained. We decided to involve some of our School Council in an attempt to address this problem and they worked on a power point which they were going to share at the next meeting of the Travel Planning Committee. This coincided with our participation in the Channel 4 documentary “The Woman Who Stopped Traffic” and the children were filmed giving their presentation. Our pupils also designed the art work for A5 leaflets and banners which were used around Durham for the duration of the ‘Leave Your Car at Home’ campaign around the county and our Year 6 pupils visited the print works to see the banners being produced.

There is no doubt that following the pupils’ involvement in the School Travel Plan there was a significant change in parking around the school but what is less clear is whether this came about as a direct result of the pupil involvement, whether it

was the media interest which was the significant factor or whether it was the combination of the two. However, as a result in their involvement, pupils did discuss the problems caused by parking with their parents/carers and the School Travel Plan did encourage more pupils to walk or cycle to school, as demonstrated in the 'Walk to School' survey (January 2008).

Despite the fact that it is difficult to accurately assess the impact of pupil involvement in this activity it is worthy of mention as it marked one of the first occasions when pupils were actively involved in a school-wide issue involving something other than resources or rules. Their participation involved designing art work and posters, leaflet distribution, compiling a power point, presenting this to an adult audience, and meeting the Chairman of the County Council when hanging a large banner from the front of County Hall when promoting the county wide campaign. Many of these activities were filmed, although not all shown on television. Throughout this staff and governors gained a real sense of how powerful pupil voice can be when sharing views with the wider community and the school went on to built on this in future years.

[H = 5] [FR = 1/2]

#### **v. Notion of Feedback into Teaching Raised**

During the first year we discussed various activities which involved pupil participation, but we had not looked at pupil input into teaching and learning which, as Rudduck and McIntyre (2007) put it, is *"altogether more risky and difficult to manage."* (ibid (2007) p9). During the summer term I began to raise this issue during staff meetings, sharing with staff the belief that, as Arnot et. al. (2004) put it,

*"pupils can offer their teachers much thoughtful, constructive and helpful commentary on life and learning in their classrooms."* (ibid, p88)

which led on to a discussion about how we could develop feedback into teaching and learning, mentioning activities such as 'thumbs up/thumbs down' and smiley faces. At this point I tried hard to avoid putting any pressure on staff to try these out at this time, simply mentioning that we would be looking at this in the future.

[H = n/a] [FR = 0]



## **e. First Year Questionnaires**

### **i. Teacher Questionnaires (2008)**

One of the most difficult issues to address when carrying out participant research is the extent to which you may affect the outcome of your studies. This problem is compounded when the person undertaking the research also happens to be the head teacher. Critics of social research will always ask how you can be sure of your findings and this is a valid question which I will attempt to address here. In my methodology I refer to Seale's 'low inference descriptors', citing this as a reason for carrying out recorded interviews. However, this leaves us with the possibility of interviewees feeling they have to respond more positively than they may want to when they are being interviewed by their manager, so whilst interviews gave me the opportunity to check on the reliability of the responses, the fact that the interviews were carried out by myself left some question as to validity, which needs to be addressed.

Within the first year of my research I wanted to give participants a chance to provide their answers anonymously to ensure they had the opportunity to raise any issues or to disclose anything they didn't feel comfortable raising during the interviews, and so improve validity. At the same time I also wanted to get some sense of how things were going within classes so I could prepare appropriately for the second year and so I devised a questionnaire for the teaching staff which was to be carried out anonymously. This included some questions which required a response on a rating scale, together with others asking for open-ended answers, thus providing a greater degree of freedom to participants to answer in whatever way they wished. The anonymous responses from the questionnaire, given as Appendix 5, were able to be compared to the responses given to the interviews to see if there was congruence or disparity between them, however careful analysis of both sets of results did not indicate that staff had been any more critical or negative when given the opportunity to respond anonymously. This, together with the use of qualitative and quantitative data, helped provide greater validity through triangulation during the three years.

The one negative point that did come out of the questionnaires, and which has continued to crop up since, is that sometimes pupils miss lessons or parts of

lessons in order to participate in pupil voice activities and some staff have found this either inconvenient or disruptive. From my review of the literature surrounding pupil voice I was aware that this could be an issue before I started - for example, Rudduck and McIntyre (2007) noted that *“pressures of time and curriculum coverage”* (ibid (2007) p156) was one of only 5 reasons found that caused staff anxiety or concern when consulting pupils about teaching and learning. To assess whether this would be the case in my school, I deliberately included the following questions within the questionnaire to determine how teachers felt about this:

Q6) *Pupil voice activities have had a negative impact on my class* and

Q9) *I think other aspects within school suffer because of pupil voice activities.*

When considering their own classes, 3 of the 7 teachers (43%) felt that sometimes pupil voice activities had a negative impact on their class, with the only reason given for this being in response to question 9:

*“Sometimes: If there’s only a few children involved they miss out on the general lessons although they can catch up.* (written response to Q9).

although this does need to be considered alongside the much stronger response that 6 out of 7 teachers (86%) always, often or sometimes felt it had a positive impact on their class and 100% felt that “pupil voice activities help our school to grow and develop” (Q10).

Returning to the findings of Rudduck and McIntyre (2007), they placed time constraints brought about by numerous curriculum demands together with lack of institutional support as a factor why, in some schools, the development of pupil voice may become compromised so that consultation was not regular or imbedded, rather it became an “end of term treat” (ibid, p158). This note of caution was also sounded by Arnot et. al. (2004) who said that the complexities of classroom life may make such activities *“feasible only around the margins – for example, as end-of-term activities”* (ibid, p89).

MacBeath et. al. (2003, p43) also found that time was an issue that frequently cropped up in their discussions with teachers, particularly the conflicting demands of school life. They noted that some activities were quite time consuming:

*“As well as the ‘loss’ of in-class time, some tools, such as questionnaires, require both preparation and follow-up.”* (ibid, p43)

Being aware of this potential danger at the outset made me even more determined to provide a high level of support to staff so that we had some chance of embedding pupil consultation into our daily practice. Unfortunately however, I did not find any magic solution to the problem of time and despite reviewing ‘best practice’ from other researchers such as Fielding and Bragg (2003, p36), I have found that the best solution for our school is one where pupils come out of class for some training/planning sessions but also use some of their own break times to design questionnaires or analyse data. For as MacBeath et. al. (2003) noted, some activities can be very time consuming as they *“require both preparation and follow-up”* (ibid, p43) and this compromise seemed to work best for us as it demonstrated to the PARs that their work was valued whilst the PARs themselves could show their level of commitment to the task. However, even when pupils do have to miss lessons or part of lessons to participate in pupil voice activities, the value of that involvement should not be forgotten.

## **ii. Pupil Questionnaires (2008)**

As discussed in Chapter 4, pupil responses were largely favourable for most questions, with the exceptions being in the sections ‘Feeling Included’ and ‘Feeling in Control’. If we consider that pupils have ticked the response ‘sometimes’ because they have at some point felt their views haven’t counted then it would seem that a significant proportion of our children have felt unimportant at some point - clearly we had work to do as a school. This is reinforced in the section entitled ‘About Being in School’ where nearly half of the responses in all categories were ‘sometimes’ or ‘never’ – for example, only 52% of pupils felt that if they had a problem the school would try to help and only 55% felt that pupils helped make some of the decisions in school whilst only 51% felt the School Council helps get things done.

The responses above give an indication of the feelings of pupils within school at this point in time and if the development of pupil voice is successful you would expect to see these figures change in future questionnaires to reflect this.

### **iii. Parent Questionnaires (2008)**

During the first year of the research period the parents were given the usual Parent Questionnaire based on a format issued by Ofsted. I did not make any alterations to this at the time in order to ask more searching questions about pupil voice and so the only questions relating to this are Q7 (The school encourages children to get involved in more than just daily lessons) and Q12 (The school takes account of children's views). Clearly as a result, discussion on this is somewhat limited. The most notable point about parental responses to these questions was that of the twenty questions asked Q7 and Q12 were the only 2 for which over 20% of parents replied 'don't know' indicating that parents knew less about school's approach to pupil involvement than any other aspect of school life. This is perhaps not that surprising as pupil voice was a relatively new area for school, one which staff were only just beginning to get to grips with at this stage, and one which the school was not yet sharing overtly with parents.

When I was reviewing the responses to this questionnaire I did not feel I had obtained all the information I might have done regarding pupil voice and so decided to amend the questionnaire for 2009 in order to address this.

## **f. Second Year Activities**

As we moved into the second year the school consolidated and built on some of the activities which had taken place the previous year. In addition, new initiatives took place increasing the impact pupil opinion had within the school which resulted in a gradual change of ethos. Staff also began to explore various ways of obtaining feedback into teaching and learning. A summary of the activities is given in Table 3 within Chapter 4. The most significant developments during this second year are discussed below:

### **i. Existing Practices**

#### **a) Pupils As Researchers**

The work of the PARs started off with the training of the new PARs. This differed from last year in that some of the training was led by the experienced PARs, now in Y6 who were able to offer advice and support throughout the year based on

their own prior experience. Roberts and Nash (2009, p183) comment that many of the students involved in their Student as Researchers work talked about growing in confidence as they became more involved in their SAR work and this has certainly been my experience. The project our PARs were involved in related to the creation of a play park which was to be situated near to three schools – including our own. They decided to extend the scope of their research by including pupils at the two nearby schools which meant they visited the schools, making presentations to the School Councils at both. They felt confident enough to do so due to the experience the Y6 PARs had gained the previous year and the teachers who met them at the other schools both commented on how confident and assured the pupils were when speaking to the School Council.

Although the PARs realised the amount of data they would have to analyse would increase, I don't think they were fully prepared for the reality of the situation! This brought up a lively discussion about the merits of sample size which in turn led to a discussion about reliability. As the pupils gained more experience in research they began to face more of the issues which researchers have to grapple with and consequently gained a greater understanding of the processes. Fielding and Bragg (2003, p35) suggested there may be a dilemma between 'product or process' when developing Students as Researchers, however during this second year our PARs succeeded, to some extent, with both. They developed a deeper understanding of the processes involved, particularly as their research extended to a much larger sample, whilst the resulting product was noteworthy.

Our PARs were again asked to participate at the Durham Pupil Voice Conference – this time they gave a powerpoint presentation of their work, to the full conference which included over 100 delegates of Head Teachers, Education Advisors and teachers in the tricky after lunch spot. Fielding et al. (2005, p48) referred to the positive input pupils could have through sharing their experiences as PARs with teachers as well as students from other schools and feedback from the conference delegates supported this as it was overwhelmingly positive (100% rating the pupils 'good' or better: 78% rating it as 'excellent'). It is perhaps worth noting that of the seven children making the presentation, one had a Statement of Educational Need, as was the case the previous year, reflecting the inclusive nature of our school. This meets an aspiration set by Hart (1997), who says:

“The goal should be to involve all persons (and)... adult-initiated projects should pay particular attention to involving the young, the elderly, and those who might be excluded because of a particular personal characteristic or disability.” (ibid, p43)

This child’s participation as a PAR was not tokenistic, although some support was given to enable his participation in line with Section 4 of the DfES SEN Toolkit (DfES, 2001). This was explored in Chapter 2.

**[H = 6] [FR = 4]**

### **b) Young Sports Leaders**

This initiative proved to be so successful last year that it was continued again, with a different cohort of pupils. The staff at the comprehensive school had been so impressed that they decided to raise the status of the ‘Young Sports Leaders’ by encouraging them to design their own T-shirts to wear during the event so they stood out more. The children were thrilled with this, as were parents. Once more the event was hugely successful and planned again for next year, so it is becoming embedded in the annual planning cycle for both primary and secondary schools.

Both Hart’s Ladder of Participation ((1997), p41 - see also Chapter 2 Figure 1, p20) and Flutter and Rudduck’s Ladder of Pupil Participation ((2004), p16 – see also Chapter 2 Figure 2, p21) focus on who initiates enquiry – adults or pupils, and on how the decision-making process is carried out. When trying to match the activity of the Young Sports Leaders onto either ladder I had some difficulty as the activity was initiated by adults but it has been carried out by pupils who have developed the initial concept to a point where adult intervention throughout the event has been minimised. It might be considered that Hart’s Ladder would put this activity at “6. Adult-initiated and Shared” however some elements of their involvement went beyond this, as firstly the Young Sports Leaders have established their ability to model each event, organise the teams ensuring they complete each event in the time given, keep score and hand over results. They have also been responsible for maintaining good behaviour and their skills have surpassed the expectation of those adults who started this activity, making their involvement less of a partnership and more ‘child-directed’, suggesting aspects of

(7). Secondly, as mentioned in Chapter 1, Hart emphasises the importance of choice and the pupils leading this event had no real choice over their participation – it was really a requirement of being a pupil in Year 5. This would cast some doubt over whether their involvement would achieve that level within Hart's Ladder.

Flutter and Rudduck's Ladder, was now proving to be even more problematic as their definitions seemed somewhat limited. On the one hand, "2: Pupils as Active Participants" would allow for the adult-initiation, whilst the way the pupils developed the activity and took such an active lead would suggest they may be operating at "Level 4: Pupils as Fully Active Participants and Co-researchers". Clearly no research model is perfect nor will it cover every eventuality. However, having considered the growth of pupil voice activities in my school I believe that it is really about more than pupil initiation and decision-making. As can be seen from the description of our Young Sports Leaders, the ability of pupils to develop an activity themselves – however it has been initiated – should be some measure of their participation. After all, they have only been able to develop any activity because the school or organisation has allowed them the freedom to do so. Youth activities of this sort rarely occur completely separately of any adult awareness, permission or support, however small that support may be.

**[H = 6/7]    [FR = 2/4]**

## **ii. New Initiatives**

### **a) Development of a Pupil Charter**

The school had formed a working party of parents, staff and Governors to focus on the various issues surrounding Equality and Diversity to ensure the new legislation in this area was being correctly addressed. It was evident that pupils within the school should develop an understanding of the issues surrounding equality and diversity and so the group delegated some members to work with pupils to look into this. The School Council was an obvious choice for this as they were a ready-made group made up of pupils from all classes. At the initial meeting they decided that drawing up a Pupil Charter could be a good way to achieve their goals and so the group set about this – looking at Respect, Anti-bullying, Racism, Gender, Disability. The completed charters, given as Appendix 9, also included a statement about Respect and 'having a voice' whilst the Junior charter included Homophobia.

The group started by looking at a charter produced by a secondary school – instantly deciding that the language and content was not suitable for primary pupils as it “had too many words and was a bit complicated” (pupil comment, 10<sup>th</sup> October 2008). There followed a series of meetings where they discussed the various headings and when they came to the ‘tackle homophobia’ section I asked if they felt they needed a separate section for homophobia or whether they felt that was covered in the bullying section. They were quite adamant that homophobia should remain as a separate section as they needed to do something about the use of the word ‘gay’ in the yard (meaning the inappropriate use of the word ‘gay’). One of the group asked again what homophobia was and was reminded by another pupil. There then followed a discussion about whether homophobia should be included in the charter for Reception pupils as they might not understand it. At this point it was suggested that Mrs. Whitton could do ‘one of her good assemblies and explain homophobia to Reception’ but after further discussion the pupils decided that they could have one charter for the Infants without homophobia and a separate charter including homophobia for the Juniors. The Charters were then typed up, checked and finally presented to the ‘Every Child Matters’ Committee of the Governing Body where they were approved. Next the charters were presented to the rest of the school community at two assemblies, led by the School Council who explained these and sent home to parents with an explanatory note as to how they had been drawn up. They were also displayed prominently around school. Over the next year we had three reported incidents of homophobic or racist language within school – in each case the incident was reported by children who referred to our charter, suggesting that the charter had raised awareness within school and encouraged pupils to speak out against discrimination.

Klein (2003) talks about a ‘continuum of participation’ where pupils move through stages on to;

“higher level forms of participation that actively engage them in decision-making. As the level of involvement increases, so does the empowerment of the students..... This is unlikely to be a sudden or necessarily intentional change but... moving along the continuum becomes a natural process once a culture of listening to pupils has become embedded in the life of a school.” (ibid, p88)



Towards the end of the second year of the project this was starting to happen. It was the pupils who drew up the charter, albeit supported by adults. The issue of homophobia can be a difficult one for some people, but there were no complaints or issues raised by parents on the publication of our charter and I am sure the reason for this was because they knew it had been produced and presented by pupils.

Typically in articles about pupil voice there is a lot of discussion about what pupils get out of the activities and the usefulness it can have at a school level. I have found over the last three years that it has also proved to be a useful way of 'selling' ideas to parents – generally they have been a lot more accepting of new ideas, policies and procedures if they have either come from the pupils or have involved them. It is important to stress however that this is only what I have found in my school and as such is not able to be generalized.

**[H = 6]     [FR = 4+]**

#### **b) Video and Photographic Policy**

The Governing Body had faced some challenging questions from parents regarding their policy over video recording and taking photographs. In brief, some parents had not agreed to this for a variety of reasons whilst the majority felt that their rights were being ignored as under the current policy they were not supposed to take photographs or to record concerts in some classes. The governors decided that this was an appropriate time for the school to review this policy and at the same time all were aware that this would not prove to be straightforward. During the first meeting to discuss this, one of the governors suggested that as the subject of most of these photographs and videos was going to be the children, then it would be sensible to ask for their views on this. This was remarkable as being the first time that any governor had suggested that we take account of pupil views when consulting on *any* policy or decision. I was doubly surprised as I had not even thought to suggest this, despite having spent so much time over the previous year talking about the positive effects pupil voice activities were beginning to have within school!

Pupil views on this subject were gathered through surveys which took place during Family Group activities (where pupils are grouped together in mixed classes from

Reception to Year 6, with family members grouped together.) Many pupils felt quite strongly about having photographs taken – with most feeling that parents should not suddenly stand up and take photographs, particularly with a flash, during a performance. Pupils hated this and found it very off-putting. In addition, more than one agreed with this pupil who said that his parents ‘couldn’t just sit back and enjoy the performance because they were too busy trying to take good photographs’ (comment from Y5 boy).

Pupils also felt quite strongly about videos. Generally they did not want videos of ‘things which might embarrass people’ (comment by Y6 girl). This was perhaps related to the fact that during the Christmas performance the previous month one pupil had had a bad attack of stage fright and had ran off crying. It should be noted that this was a very unusual occurrence and one that I had not previously witnessed in over 20 years of working on productions, however it was clearly in the minds of the pupils as a few of them held this view. It is also possible that the programme ‘You’ve Been Framed’ was uppermost in pupils’ minds and most of the pupils wanted to protect their friends and themselves from the prospect of having their embarrassing moments shown ‘You’ve Been Framed’ style – whether within school, at other people’s houses, on national television or ‘YouTube’. What pupils seemed to want most was the ability to exercise a degree of control over what was shown, and this could not be achieved if members of an audience could photograph or video without any restrictions.

From the views of pupils, parents and staff the governors decided to opt for a policy which allowed for one recording to be made, which could be suitably edited if necessary to ensure only pupils with permission were included. Parents would be allowed to take photographs without the use of a flash during performances but encouraged to wait until the end when better quality staged photographs could be taken with agreed groups, against the backdrops.

Finally, when the governors shared this with parents they made it clear that the policy had been based on the wishes of the pupils. Whether by coincidence or as a result of this approach, there were virtually no negative responses from the parents regarding the change of policy.

**[H = 5]     [FR = 4],**

### **c) Pupil Enterprise Work**

Building capacity in our pupils and developing a range of skills was central within the ethos of the school. Developing enterprise initiatives was a natural progression and pupils in Years 3 and 4 undertook programmes delivered by trained volunteers to develop their understanding and skills in this area. Each session had a clear focus building to a final event presented by pupils, giving them a chance to showcase the skills and attributes they had been establishing to a wider audience.

The Year 6 pupils were given the opportunity to develop an enterprise initiative in groups. One group chose to develop a jewellery business which started off quite small, making and selling jewellery in class, and grew to include selling to the whole school and at school events. This group continued their business and participated in the Local Authority Young Enterprise Challenge for Primary Schools where they had to run a stall, marketing their products, make a presentation to the 'Dragons' (the local authority judges for the event) and answer questions. They won this event decisively, which is only one measure of their success.

During their pitch to the 'Dragons' the group decided that they needed better display material and so they discussed this with me. Our secretary supplied them with a range of educational catalogues which included various display boards of different sizes and costs. I introduced them to the concept of 'matched funding' and the pupils then wrote to the Chair of Governors with details of the board they wished to purchase, asking for half the cost – which they secured!

Although the Enterprise Group had started off with only Year 6 pupils, as it had developed over the course of the year they had decided to increase their numbers to include some pupils from Year 5. One of the reasons they gave for doing this was to develop sustainability – so that when they left the initiative could continue – as it indeed did, all through the following year where they moved into bespoke products to 'keep ahead of the market' (comment by a Y6 Enterprise member). Pupils continue to run the jewellery stall at events and once a week at break times. The range of skills and attributes developed by pupils is quite extensive and as their ability grew so did their expectations as to what could be achieved. It should be noted that staff and parents embraced and celebrated this initiative too.

**[H = 7]    [FR = 4+]**

#### **d) Feedback about Teaching and Learning**

During the year, teachers began to use a range of strategies to gain some degree of feedback about teaching and learning from their pupils. Whilst this began in a tentative way, it gained some momentum as teachers began to experience the advantages. This view was echoed in the General Teaching Council's 'Research for Teachers Anthology 3' which concluded,

"Consulting with pupils is also beneficial to teachers as it can help them understand how to support pupil engagement and build more open, collaborative and communicative relationships with their pupils."

(GTC (2010a) p11)

Staff began to see how the feedback given by pupils could help them to shape their teaching so that it could reach *all* pupils, through adapting approaches and modifying resources. As this approach developed, the relationships between pupils and teachers also began to change, becoming more open. This too was found to be the case in the GTC's 3<sup>rd</sup> Anthology (ibid (2010a) p28) and staff continued to develop these strategies over the forthcoming year.

**[H = 5]     [FR = 3/4]**

#### **e) Curriculum Input**

In the summer term, one class piloted a new approach to curriculum development whereby the content and delivery of the curriculum was based around the interests of the pupils. The teacher was really surprised at how well this went and how the children came up with ideas she'd never considered:

"I was astounded... they came up with things that I would never have even thought of to put in and it was all relevant."

(T1, 2009)

This pilot activity was an important development for the school as it served as an encouraging example to other staff who then went on to implement this approach in their own classes the following term. Had the activity been less successful, or the teacher less enthusiastic, this initiative may have been doomed to failure before it even began.

**[H = 5]     [FR = 3/4]**

## **g. Second Year Interviews and Questionnaires**

### **i. Staff Interviews**

During the second year the teaching staff and non-teaching staff began to differ in their views as to the extent to which pupils could or indeed should be involved in school decisions – with the teaching staff giving more positive responses. This is perhaps surprising considering the responses given in the initial year, where the non-teaching staff were more able to see the possible advantages whilst the teaching staff gave detailed answers discussing possible problems. So what brought about this change? Arguably one of the main differences between teaching and non-teaching staff is that the teachers are responsible for planning, delivering, assessing, teaching, working and being responsible for behaviour of pupils as a class on a daily basis whilst non-teaching staff, including Learning Support Assistants, may only engage in, or be responsible for some of these. In addition, clerical staff have a more ‘casual’ relationship with most pupils and are seldom, if ever, involved in their educational (or social) development. From the aspects listed above behaviour would seem quite significant and this has previously been discussed when it was linked to the control of pupils.

Non-teaching staff previously gave reasons for pupil involvement based around the need for pupils to feel involved and included in their learning and general school experience, whilst teaching staff at this point began to see that pupil input could actually have a positive impact on teaching and learning within the classroom. Initially teachers felt a little daunted by this, as highlighted in the following answer describing a teacher’s initial feelings about introducing pupil feedback into teaching and learning:

“it’s a bit scary when you first start thinking about it... ...when you speak to them they might take you on a different direction which works brilliantly and that’s better for both parts really..” (T6, 2009)

This anxiety also extended to the introduction of pupil input into the curriculum, as can be seen in the following comment by another teacher who was anticipating this initiative:

“..being in Key Stage 2 it is a little bit frightening in that – well you know, we’re so used to planning to the nth degree – so I can’t say to begin with I won’t think oww.. I’ll have less control over things – but no, I actually think it’s quite nice to do.”  
(T4, 2009)

Here once again we encounter the notion of ‘teacher control’ and I began to think as the research unfolded that one of the central features in developing pupil voice within school, and thus in determining its success, was how this issue of control was addressed. As staff began to see how pupil input into school could be beneficial and thus value such input, they became more willing to push the boundaries beyond ‘General Input’ and move into aspects of ‘Classroom Input’. Although these first steps may have been a bit tentative, and taken with a degree of caution (as seen above), the teachers were willing to take this step by the end of the second year. I would suggest that a contributing factor here was pacing – staff were not rushed towards pupil input into teaching and learning and the curriculum, they were allowed time to experience the benefits of pupil involvement, time and space to discuss and share successes and encouragement to try more.

However, whilst the relationship between teachers and pupils had clearly begun to change, the attitudes of the non-teaching staff towards pupils had not changed significantly at this point, with half of the non-teachers believing that pupils should be very clear that the staff were in charge, although it should be remembered that we are dealing with a very small sample ( $n = 6$ ). As can be seen in Chapter 4 p77, non-teaching staff focussed on pupils understanding the boundaries, suggesting that they still saw pupils as being on the receiving end of education rather than an ‘active participant’ (Flutter and Rudduck (2004) p16) in the process. This difference in attitude between the teaching and non-teaching staff raises some questions:

- 1) Why have the teachers become more open to the development of pupil voice?
- 2) Are the views of non-teaching staff restricted by underlying fears of loss of control?
- 3) Will the views of non-teaching staff change over time as they see teachers embrace pupil voice activities in school?

The above questions open interesting areas for discussion – which I shall only touch on here. Perhaps teachers, certainly those with good discipline and positive relationships with pupils, are more confident and more ready to take risks than non-teaching staff, who are often seen in a supportive role within the classroom. In addition, the teaching staff in this research have been more actively involved in many more of the pupil voice initiatives than the non-teaching staff and so have perhaps had greater opportunity to develop more “collaborative and communicative relationships with their pupils” (GTC (2010a) p11). If this is the case, you might expect that as the research develops and non-teaching staff take a more active role, their attitudes may change to become more open and less concerned about loss of control and I shall review this later.

## **ii. Pupil Questionnaires (2009)**

As mentioned in Chapter 4, the Annual Pupil Questionnaire had been adapted to provide information regarding the extent of participation into pupil voice activities within school. It was unfortunate that I had not shown enough foresight to include this in the Pupil Questionnaire the previous year as this means that no direct numerical comparison can be made. However, as all of the pupil voice activities in 2007 – 2008 had been continued and added to, whilst some of the activities which pupils took part in during 2008-2009 would not have been available prior to them completing the questionnaire in summer 2008, it would seem reasonable to conclude that there was an increase in the number of pupils involved in 2009.

In the 2008-2009 period, 48% of Infants took part in pupil voice activities (see Table 6, p79). It should be noted that this percentage is high as all pupils in Year 2 become Mini-buds, whilst in 2009 the only activity open to pupils in Reception and Year 1 listed on the questionnaire is to be a member of the School Council. (note: some children were absent on the day of the questionnaire - had all pupils been present the figures for R and Y1 would have been a little higher).

Typically, as pupils move further up the school the range of activities with which they can participate increases, as can be seen in Table 7 (Chapter 4, p79). The reason for this is that pupils become more independent as they mature, often better able to organise themselves and to act independently. This is important because the organisation and running of many pupil voice activities can be quite

time consuming – for staff as well as pupils. For example, each new group of PARs has to be trained so they understand and can select from a range of research strategies, see the importance of carrying out research accurately and with integrity and ensure that each stage is undertaken appropriately. Pupils also need to be able to ask for help and guidance when needed and to see that asking for help when needed is vital, for to fudge results when unsure would compromise the integrity of the research. The Enterprise Group also needed a degree of support to get started and a secure system in place (which could be discreetly overseen) as it involved money. Generally the older the pupil, the less guidance required, thus the less teacher input required. This is an important factor in a small school (n = 164) as there are less staff available to support the many activities that take place, of which it should be remembered pupil voice is only one. For this reason the school has chosen to introduce some pupil voice activities to older pupils, with the view that once trained, some of these pupils could help train other pupils – thus helping to make the activity more sustainable. For example, in 2008-2009, the Y6 PARs helped train the Y5 PARs and supported them in the activities (i.e. when carrying out questionnaires etc.) thus reducing the input required by staff. This had the added benefits of both increasing the independence of the PARs (arguably enabling them to move up Hart's Ladder ((1997) p41 – see also Chapter 2 Figure 1 p21) whilst raising their profile within school.

Whilst enlisting pupil support to help train others has proven to be very useful, it does place further responsibility on staff to follow through once an activity or group is underway. This is something noted in the IPiL Project (MacBeath et. al. (2008) p28) when they noted that the time and trust invested by pupils needed to result in some form of tangible outcome from staff. However, their project findings were slightly more pessimistic than what I have encountered in my school, as they say:

“The problem is that much of what pupils want can't be delivered. This may be either because it is unrealistic, too ambitious or because however good a proposal might be, there are often too many constraints, vested interests, conventions and priorities that take precedence.”

(MacBeath et. al. (2008) p29)



From the experience I gained as head teacher at my previous school, I believed that the most likely way to secure success for this development was to *try* to lead by example, be open about any problems and to never promise what I was unsure could be delivered – to both staff and pupils. (The degree to which I was successful in this aim is for others to judge!) In addition, as stated previously, I have tried to pace this activity, giving it time to develop – another view shared by the IPiL project who stated that there are “no quick fixes” (ibid, p30 & p50).

When comparing the findings of the 2009 Questionnaire with those of the 2008 Questionnaire it is clear that pupils feel they have more input into the school and feel more valued (see Table 8, p80). In a school where there are always multiple activities and initiatives happening at the same time, it is difficult to claim that one change brings about a specific outcome. However, the development of pupil voice, which had been ongoing for 2 years by this stage, had involved a series of changes which had impacted on the whole school community and so it would seem reasonable to suggest that the development of pupil voice had at the very least contributed to this increased feeling of pupil involvement in school.

### **iii. Parent Questionnaires (2009)**

The above note of caution carries through to analysis of the Parent Questionnaire. Added to this, consideration should also be given to the number of responses submitted, around 23%. Whilst this is fairly typical when considering response rates for our Annual Parent Questionnaire over recent years, it is quite low when you consider that three-quarters of the parent population chose not to respond. However, the findings of the returns indicate that of those that did respond, most parents (92%) believe that the school encourages pupils to get involved, a 19% increase from the previous year (see Q7 Appendix 7). This would support the findings of the Pupil Questionnaire and Teacher Interviews in the previous sections – offering a degree of triangulation, in turn adding to the validity of the work (see Methodology, pp50-51). However, whilst responding parents appeared confident that the school was now encouraging pupils to get involved, a significant portion, 24% (only a 3% improvement on the previous year) still did not seem sure whether the school took account of their children’s views (see Q12 Appendix 7).

Overall, results for this question had improved slightly from the previous year as can be seen in Table 18 below:

**Table 18: Comparison of Parent Questionnaire Responses 2008 and 2009**

	2008				2009			
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Don't Know	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Don't Know
Q7: The school encourages children to get involved in more than just daily lessons.	23%	50%	4%	23%	34%	58%	5%	3%
Q12: The school takes account of children's views.	15%	50%	8%	27%	21%	50%	5%	24%

It would seem that the school still had some way to go in sharing with parents the various ways in which it listened to pupils and took account of their views.

The written responses to the questionnaire elicited even fewer responses from parents with only 12 parents responding to Q19 which was directly related to pupil voice activities. All except one were very positive, and even that response did acknowledge the importance of pupils being listened to but stated that good behaviour was more important. Given the small proportion of respondents to the written questions, it is difficult to draw any firm conclusions, other than to note that the parents who took the trouble to respond in a written format did so in support of pupil voice activities with two suggesting ideas which could be adopted.

We were now at the stage of development within school where it is having an impact on our school ethos – staff, especially teachers - were generally listening and taking account of ideas and suggestions put forward by pupils, pupils are feeling more involved with many confident enough to put forward their views in these aspects included in both General Input and Classroom Input. However, our school community is made up of pupils, staff and parents/carers and my experience has taught me that most initiatives achieve maximum success when all three groups are involved. For this reason I considered the two suggestions put forward by parents as an important step, albeit a small one, towards us developing a greater understanding with parents into the importance of pupil voice and the positive impact this can have on our pupils.

## **h. Third Year Activities**

The third year of this research saw a further increase in the number of pupil voice activities, including the first activity initiated wholly by the pupils themselves. Table 19 below shows the rise of pupil voice activities throughout the three years:

**Table 19: Pupil Voice Activities 2007 – 2010**

	Existing Practices		New Activity	Pilot Activity	Total	Initiated by Children
	No Major Change	Developed Further				
2007 - 2008	0	1	3	1 (idea introduced)	5	0
2008 - 2009	2	1	4	1	8	0
2009 - 2010	2	4	7	0	12	1

### **i. Existing Practices**

The work relating to Anti-bullying and to the Sports Leaders have continued as before and whilst amended slightly, they underwent no significant changes, thus the ratings remained as they were.

### **a) Enterprise Activities**

The school ran an Enterprise Week for the Year 6 pupils, led by an external provider who has run this activity for a number of years in other schools. The pupils had a range of ingredients to choose from and their task was to develop a smoothie. They then carried out a taste-testing session with staff, providing them with feedback so they could adapt their recipes. They also designed and made packaging for their product, produced an advert and jingle and made a formal presentation promoting their product to the Dragon's Den who selected an overall winner. This was a panel of four judges which included the Deputy Manager of Asda Living, the manager of shopping centre, a County Councillor and a Business Studies teacher from the local comprehensive who commented that some of the activities undertaken by the pupils were similar to some GCSE work her Year 11s were doing! The staff involved in the activity also selected a group which had shown the most initiative and commitment to the activity throughout the week.

The reason for including this activity here is to show some of the work carried out to build capacity within pupils by helping them to increase their skills in a range of

areas. It also shows the way the ethos of the school has developed – staff saw the value of this activity and governors were happy for the pupils to devote a full week to this activity, even although they were in Y6 (the year they take their Statutory Attainment Tests) and were willing to meet the expense of this.

A video was made of the activities and shared with parents, who were amazed at the confidence and skill level shown by their children. This also served to heighten awareness of work done by pupils throughout the school.

Building on the previous year, we expanded the enterprise activities delivered by Young Enterprise to include our Year 5 pupils. Our existing Enterprise Group extended their jewellery making activities to introduce bespoke items. They also ran their stall at open nights, before concerts and one lunchtime a week throughout the year, providing them with a healthy profit. They were able to price their items sensibly, based on the cost of individual items and also the amount of money children brought to school to buy the jewellery – working out that they need to make most items within £1.

**[H = 6] [FR = 4]**

#### **b) Pupils As Researchers**

The PARs developed in the same way they had in Year 2, with the Y6 PARs training the new Y5 PARs. PAR activity was focussed on the ‘new’ school building. I had wanted the pupils to have an input in a way that avoided ‘tokenism’ (Hart (1997) p42) and they were involved in three main activities: the cloakroom, the wall displays and the signage.

They helped organise the cloakroom areas, selecting colours for the pegs and baskets. For this they surveyed the whole school to determine the favourite colours for each class. They then had to resolve the issue which arose when two classes wanted the same colour – which they did admirably – and feedback results to the pupils. This may not sound significant but the result of their work was that most of the school had a sense of ownership of their cloakroom space.

Secondly the PARs were heavily involved in designing the signage around the school. They met a graphic designer, looked at his portfolio of over 100 designs

and asked for copies of about 12. Using this as a guide, they developed their own designs and then presented them to the designer when they met him again. After discussing these they took him on a walk around the site to determine the size and location of the five signs, which were then made and erected in time for the opening of our new building.

Finally, the PARs selected the display areas for the corridors. Having looked at a range of options, they decided that they wanted the corridors to resemble an Art Gallery – with pupils’ work framed. They visited the building whilst work was underway wearing hard hats and high visibility jackets to determine the size, colour and layout of the 76 frames, drawing up a list to be purchased. The result is fantastic – much admired by the whole school community, and a lasting testament to the work of the PARs who feel an immense sense of pride in their achievements.

**[H = 6] [FR = 3/4]**

### **c) Feedback about Teaching and Learning**

Teachers continued to build on the progress made the previous year, developing more adventurous ways of obtaining feedback from pupils. The most significant development occurred when staff shared experiences at a staff meeting – discussing what they had tried, what had worked well etc. This was quite a vibrant meeting involving a lot of humour and shared anecdotes – the upshot of which was that staff went away feeling positive about their experiences and keen to try different, more searching strategies. This demonstrated one of the benefits of developing an initiative as a whole school – staff can share ideas and gain strength and encouragement from one-another.

By this point, staff were more comfortable with the notion of seeking feedback from pupils and they integrated many of their views into their lessons, for example altering the pace. This benefit was also noted by Arnot et. al. (2004) who stated:

“By consulting pupils, we can begin to learn how they experience the pace of learning and how much they feel they can adapt or modify the teacher’s pace.”  
(ibid, p66)

Most staff felt that pupil input into teaching and learning had had a significant impact into school and when asked why, one teacher replied:

“Basically because staff have been willing to make that change and sort of address their own teaching....But I think it's the way we have done it – we've got children more motivated and excited about what their learning and having those ideas. And it's training them from the very beginning that they can input into what they want.” (T1, 2010)

The ethos of the school had undergone a shift, staff found that the feedback from pupils was enabling them to teach more effectively. More importantly perhaps, they also realised that doing so did not undermine their position within the class nor cause any discipline problems, perhaps because they could control the situation as it was up to them to decide when to ask pupils to provide feedback.

**[H = 5] [FR = 3/4]**

#### **d) Pupil Input into the Curriculum**

Pupils were also starting to have an input into the curriculum. Following on from the pilot the previous year, teachers adapted their planning and delivery of topic work in a significant way, by introducing the topic title to pupils and inviting them to decide what they wanted to learn and how they wanted to learn. They did this typically through post-it notes around the topic title, using questions which were a mixture of some simply requiring factual recall, some requiring a degree of analysis and those which were higher order, demanding explanations and stimulating thinking skills, for example ‘how might we have developed differently if..?’ or ‘what would have happened if... had happened instead of ...?’ etc. Some teachers also introduced a ‘Question of the Week’. Subsequently some staff have used an IT tool ‘Wallwisher’ ( see [www.wallwisher.com/wall](http://www.wallwisher.com/wall) ) on which pupils can post their questions and this has further enhanced this activity.

These curricular changes have led to a more relevant curriculum for pupils – to an extent they learn the things they want to learn, although teachers ensure all aspects that should be covered are covered. However, this approach has been focused on topic work, typically most things other than maths or English, although the cross-curricular nature of this approach has enhanced both subjects. Arnot et

al. (2004) also noted the advantages of making the curriculum more relevant to pupils, suggesting that it gives pupils more ownership of their learning (ibid, p64) and staff have indicated that this has indeed been the case as can be seen in their responses, firstly when asked ‘what is the best change that pupil voice has brought about?’:

“Children feel more in control of their social learning and personal learning and I also think it is feeding through to their academic learning.”  
(T4, 2010)

and then to the question ‘what has had the biggest impact on your class?’

“I think the creative curriculum – certainly getting the children to have a lead in what is being taught has helped with planning and also to get them involved in the learning.”  
(T5, 2010)

Staff believe that teaching has become more pupil-centred and there was a tangible shift in the ethos of the school. Staff are taking more note of the needs of the pupils and involving them in decision-making – seeing their input as essential to the strategic development of the school.

The two modifications described above may not seem radical on the surface, however they have required a major shift in the way teachers planned and prepared their work, as well as a significant change to their approach to teaching and learning. Most staff carried out a significant amount of planning during school holidays, to be delivered during the term. This new approach does not allow for this and requires staff to review their planning and delivery virtually on a day-to-day basis. Requesting teachers to change what is for some long-established habits, giving over control as to what is taught to the pupils, was a huge ask, but staff rose to the challenge admirably – perhaps again because they could see first-hand the positive impact pupil input could have, helping them as teachers to improve and in some cases transform, the learning experience.

**[H = 6] [FR = 3/4]**

## **ii. New Initiatives**

In this third year a number of new initiatives took place within school, the most significant of which I will discuss below:

#### **a) Student Nutrition Action Group (SNAG)**

This initiative partially came about from a suggestion from the Parent Questionnaire in 2009 (see Appendix 7). The pupils in SNAG meet with the cook, parents, a representative from the Catering Company and myself to discuss menus, to sample food and to feedback information they have collected from pupils within school. Pupils are very keen to be part of SNAG (partly because of the taste-testing!) but also because they enjoy planning and carrying out research. For example, the pupils had to choose between 3 types of menus and did so by carrying out surveys in their own classes, collecting results and presenting the outcome to the group. They then had to carry out research to determine which sandwich fillings pupils would like. These pupils were not specifically trained to do this (unlike the PARs) however, the group did include some PARs who were able to share their research skills with the others. Pupils felt good that their work had a direct impact on the meals within school, improving lunches for everyone, whilst the PARs within the group enjoyed sharing their expertise with others.

**[H= 6] [FR = 4]**

#### **b) Leaflet for Refugee Week**

This project was initiated by adults who introduced the idea to the Y5 PARs. Another adult, a member of the Ethnic Minorities and Traveller Achievement Service (EMTAS), met and shared information with them before they set about devising an information leaflet to distribute (aimed primarily at pupils) during Refugee Week. The pupils were then given the freedom to create the leaflet themselves, with adult input only offered when help/advice was sought. The final result was much simpler than the original plan – simply containing information about the difference between a refugee and an asylum seeker together with some basic facts about both, which served to dispel some misconceptions. It is fair to say that what they produced was simple but highly effective, free from clutter and unnecessary text. Governors were so impressed by the final leaflet that they agreed to colour copy it for all families within school.

During the planning stages, the pupils confidently followed their own ideas, setting aside detail which had been suggested by adults, but which they thought was unnecessary. Governors and parents were very impressed at what they achieved, particularly as their leaflet, which contained the school name and logo, was copied



by the Local Authority and distributed around Durham. Parents took note of the leaflet and it was received positively, stimulating some conversation. I believe this was because it had been produced and promoted by pupils and was easy to read. Although I have no concrete evidence to support this view I would suggest that had a similar leaflet been produced by EMTAS or the Refugee Council it is doubtful if this would have had the same impact on our parents/carers or children.

**[H = 6] [FR = 4]**

### **iii. Pupil Led Activities**

Whilst the other activities were all instigated by adults, the following activity was completely initiated by pupils. As the school was approaching the time to conduct the Annual Pupil Questionnaire, a few pupils (including some PARs) came to me to say that they thought it was inappropriate for the younger pupils within school. They knew this because they had helped administer the questionnaire the previous year and had subsequently conducted their own questionnaires with them regarding aspects of the new building. Not only did they suggest that it needed altering, but they also had firm views on how this could be done. Their foremost suggestion involved replacing some of the text with pictures - a variety of faces; smiley, straight line and frown. The pupils described what they wanted and asked me to help find appropriate images to be used. After the questionnaire had been rewritten (mostly by the pupils) they carried out a 'mini trial' to check that the younger pupils understood and could complete it with minimal help.

This is the only activity which would achieve (8) on Hart's Ladder as it is the only one wholly initiated by the children. The pupils were also mature enough to seek a degree of adult help to support them in their activity. I wholeheartedly agree with Hart who, when he talked about children choosing to collaborate with adults, said that he;

“can only applaud this as a demonstration of children who feel sufficiently competent and confident in their role as members of the community that they do not find it necessary to deny their needs for collaboration with others.”

(Hart (1997) p45)

As pupil voice activities grew within the school, so did pupil confidence – in both their belief in their own ability to direct and carry out activities and in their trust that

adults would not interfere or take over. However, it has taken three years to arrive at this point, and as MacBeath et al (2008) note:

“allowing children and young people a voice that can be heard and roles to play in their schools cannot be legislated in the short-term. It is a developmental process, an unfolding over time.” (ibid, p30)

They believe that there are four key factors influencing success including the ethos of the school, the priorities of the school, the degree of commitment of staff and the extent to which pupils feel part of the school. However, I have found that these elements are hard to separate, for as pupil voice as developed within the school, the ethos has changed to become more ‘pupil centred’, and as these activities have proved to be successful I have found staff have become more committed to its success. This in turn has led to pupils feeling more involved within school. MacBeath et. al. believe that it is the ‘interplay’ of these factors that results in schools ascending Hart’s Ladder.

**[H = 8] [FR = 4+]**

## **j. Third Year Interviews and Questionnaires**

### **i. Staff Interviews (2010)**

The findings from the interviews carried out at the end of the research period were quite illuminating and highlighted the differences in attitudes between the teaching staff and the non-teaching staff. Reasons for this will be discussed at the end of this section.

#### **a) Teacher Interviews**

The purpose of this research was to explore the development of pupil voice within a school community and to look at the changes, if any, which occurred. For this reason the final questionnaires for teachers focussed on which aspects they felt had an impact both on themselves, as teachers, and on the school. Looking first at the aspects which teachers thought had the least impact, most staff could not give a response – other than to say that some activities were more suited to older pupils. One teacher did say that she felt the School Council was having less of an

impact but this may have been because the teacher who was responsible for this had been absent due to ill-health and the Council had not met as frequently as it normally does. In addition, some of the activities the School Council used to engage in are now carried out by other groups, such as the Student Nutrition Action Group (SNAG), who now take responsibility for anything related to school lunches. Rather than be seen as a negative, this should be viewed as progress as there are now more groups able to work on school development and improvement, thus there is the potential for more progress to be achieved.

Turning to the aspects teachers thought had the most impact, many teachers felt that pupils had developed the skills necessary to have a significant input into school - noting this as the 'best change'. It is evident that the initial concerns outlined previously (see Chapter 4: Initial Responses) which included 'pupils taking over the school', 'children wanting everything their own way', or 'children wanting things *now*' had been dispelled. Results of the questionnaires have shown that staff now embrace the idea of pupil input into all aspects of school life, including teaching and learning and the curriculum with most staff citing examples of how this input has improved their own practice and made the curriculum more inspiring, with the result that, as T2 noted "the children are happier" and "they're more interested in what they're doing" (T2 2010). T5 thought that the best change was "for my own teaching" (T5 2010), concentrating the change on the most fundamental aspect of her role – teaching. So what has brought about this change? Rudduck and McIntyre (2007) stated that when it came to pupil consultation, teachers:

“..develop clear views of its benefits only as a result of engaging in it.”

(ibid, p120)

I tend to agree with this – the teachers here have experienced first-hand the benefits of pupil involvement and not experienced many (if any) cases where pupils have taken advantage or have failed to understand that often a degree of compromise is needed. However I feel this is not the only reason for success. Their own explanations for why the development of pupil voice has worked can be seen in these responses:

“Gradually we’ve built upon it so staff have really had a chance to take it on board and understand it and see the positives...It was small steps at first, but now... you know, we’re doing it in so many ways it just feeds across the whole school.” (T6, 2010)

A view which is supported by this teacher who said that she thought it worked,

“because the teachers have come together, we’ve worked together, we’ve shared ideas and we’ve bounced ideas off each other which has been really useful to see that you’re each doing the same thing and you’re on the right track. Teachers have given feedback on how the children are more involved in their learning so I think it has helped the children.” (T7, 2010)

The school is smaller than average and staff are encouraged to work together, sharing ideas and supporting one-another when undertaking new initiatives. This has been evident throughout the three years, as staff have shared what has worked, what hasn’t and what has surprised them, and I feel this ethos has encouraged staff to move out of their comfort zone and take a few more risks, with positive results.

#### **b) Non-teaching Interviews**

The non-teaching staff were given similar questions to the teachers and when asked which initiative had the least impact, they gave a comparable response. Half of the non-teachers could not identify a specific aspect whilst the other half mentioned the School Council saying, as the teachers did, that a lot of their work was now carried out by other groups such as SNAG and the PARs. Whilst the non-teaching staff also noted a slight difficulty caused by the PARs, that of a mild disruption to class lessons, their response did allude to a possible solution to this – saying that the questionnaires were too long for the younger pupils, thus implying that if they were shorter they would be fine. Interestingly, teaching staff either did not pick up on this or chose not to mention it. Despite this minor criticism, non-teaching staff were very positive about the input the PARs had into school, with many of them responding, when asked in the open question, that PARs and SNAG were amongst the best changes brought about by pupil voice.

Unlike the teachers, they did not list any aspects relating to either teaching and learning or the curriculum at this point, indicating that either they did not recognise that these changes had taken place or did not particularly value them. When asked specifically if they thought the development of pupil voice had an impact on the curriculum, whilst one participant felt she couldn't accurately judge as she wasn't class-based, the remaining five responded very positively. They made no reference to pupil feedback to lessons and this may be because they do not plan or deliver lessons themselves and so either have limited interest in this or it was not uppermost in their mind and so did not think to mention it. Unfortunately they were not asked specifically for their views on this as this might have helped clarify the issue. Nevertheless, the fact that none of the six non-teaching staff mentioned feedback into teaching, either in a positive or negative way, indicates that it was not of prime importance to them.

### **c) Staff Response Summary**

Both teaching and non-teaching staff gave very positive feedback about the development of pupil voice within the school, with teachers focussing on the impact this had to teaching and learning and the curriculum, whilst non-teaching staff focussed more on the various groups which had an impact into school. This highlighted the main difference in their roles – teachers teach and at the very least shape the curriculum whilst non-teaching class-based staff support both the learning process and the work of pupil-based groups, mostly under the direction of the teachers. All staff, possibly due to their own direct involvement, felt that pupil input into school life was a positive thing, for both the pupils themselves and the school organisation, and recognised that older pupils play a more significant part in various action groups. Many teachers indicated that pupil input had helped improve their own performance and felt very positive about this.

Each pupil voice activity described in this chapter was rated according to Hart's Ladder of Participation (see Table 17, p109), then Flutter and Rudduck's Ladder of Participation (see Figure 2, p22), allowing a degree of quantitative assessment to be made of the development of pupil voice activities throughout the three year research period. An analysis of this reveals that as time progressed, the activities generally moved further up both ladders, indicating that pupils were participating at a higher level, even starting to initiate some activities themselves.

## **ii. Pupil Questionnaires (2010)**

At the start of the research period I decided to draw results from the Annual Pupil Questionnaire which took place every year around May. The questionnaire included a range of questions relating to how pupils felt about being in school, what they enjoyed and the degree to which they felt valued. As previously mentioned, the questionnaire had been completely rewritten in 2008 and allowed for pupils to respond to both open and closed questions through words or pictures and I felt enough information would be gathered to give a clear picture of pupils' views during the research period. In 2010, pupils noted that it was too complex for the younger children and they redesigned it so that it was easier for pupils to complete. If the questionnaire had been too difficult in the past then this year's amended questionnaire should provide more accurate responses.

As was seen in Chapter 4, whilst pupil responses in the 2010 questionnaire were mostly more positive than in 2008, they were not as high as in the previous year. A review of the individual responses from each class gave the general picture that while there were no great differences between any of the classes, Key Stage 1 responses were slightly higher than those of Key Stage 2, the KS1 responses were all fairly similar and in KS2 the Y6 results were slightly lower overall (but not in every case) than the other two classes, with the Y4/5 class having the slightly higher responses overall. This analysis has not offered any useful explanation for the 2010 outcomes, of which one of the most surprising results related to the question "I learn things which are interesting" which fell from 85% in 2009 to 73% in 2010. These responses show a return to results very similar to those obtained at the end of the first year of research, despite our curricular changes and this led me to conclude that more accurate interpretation would have been possible if I had supplemented the questionnaires with some individual or group interviews, asking pupils about their views on the curriculum changes verbally. The questionnaires certainly provided a lot of information but a sharper focus may have led to a more precise interpretation.

A review of the 2010 data may suggest nothing much has changed in school over the last three years despite our curriculum developments. However another explanation may be that as pupils have become more used to shaping the curriculum their expectations have been raised, and they have become more

demanding as not everyone can have all their requests met in a class of more than twenty. Interpretation at this stage is only speculative and further analysis is necessary.

Pupil involvement throughout the school had increased considerably from the first year as was shown on Table 15 in Chapter 4, which indicated an overall increase from 29% in 2008 to 69% by 2010. This would not have been possible if staff had not supported the development of pupil voice and helped increase the number of activities available to children. The 2010 questionnaire attempted to determine if pupils would like to be involved in activities, and the resulting figures would indicate that the vast majority of pupils, all at KS2 and over 85% at KS1, want to be. The fact that 44% of Infant pupils and 81% of KS2 pupils were involved in pupil voice activities would indicate the school was providing many pupils with the opportunities they were seeking – although the figures would support feedback that younger pupils wanted to be involved in many of the activities only open to the older ones, reinforcing the popularity of such groups. Furthermore, pupils themselves gave very positive feedback about their involvement within the school and together this may suggest that pupil voice was indeed having a positive impact on pupils, thus there may be some reason for surmising that the 2010 responses were more the result of higher expectations on the part of the pupils rather than a poorer experience.

### **iii. Parent Questionnaires (2010)**

Whilst 90% of parents felt that the school encouraged the pupils to take a full part in school life (Q7), three indicated they were not sure and these responses came from parents of children in the Infant classes. This may support the view that older pupils participate in a wider range of activities, particularly if these parents do not have any other children in the Junior classes. However, this is not a safe conclusion to draw, as whilst each questionnaire which indicated the 'Don't Know' response for Q7 was filled to represent one child, parents were given the option of filling in the questionnaire more than once if they have more than one child, or choosing to fill in a composite questionnaire. Nevertheless, the fact that all parents of older pupils who filled in the questionnaire felt that the school did encourage pupils to be involved in more than daily lessons can be seen as positive support for pupil involvement throughout the school, and parents' awareness of this.

The highest percentage return from the research period, 83%, felt that the school took account of pupils' views, whilst 10% (3 parents) indicated they were unsure about this and 7% (2 parents) disagreeing that this was the case. This suggests that the school does not share pupil involvement with parents as well as it might and led the school to include a section in the monthly newsletter communicating information of pupil involvement in school with the wider community. All of the 3 'unsure' responses came from parents in KS1, supporting the view outlined above, whilst of the two negative responses, one came from a parent of a Y5 pupil and the other did not indicate which class the pupils was in.

The Annual Parent Questionnaires have always produced many replies with little or no written comments on them and so the ten written responses (34%) specifically about pupil voice was considered a reasonable return. The three responses, indicating that 'whilst pupil voice was a good thing it should not be taken too far as *teachers know best*' mirror the staff responses at the beginning of the research period. It would be interesting to find out whether these views changed in line with their experiences of their child's involvement in aspects of school life over the coming years, however as the responses are anonymous, this would be virtually impossible to ascertain due to the low response rate to the questionnaire. All parents who provided written responses acknowledged the benefits pupil voice had brought, and no negative responses were offered, so this would suggest the parent community were either supportive of pupil voice or at the very least, not upset enough by it to respond when given the opportunity to do so in an anonymous way.

At the end of the research period, parents have come to see the important role pupils play within school, and recognise that when pupils are involved in decision-making this can improve their self-esteem and self-confidence whilst also assisting them to develop skills which will help them to become better citizens of the future. Some parents felt these activities should be restricted and that staff views should be paramount, however on the whole most parents who responded felt strongly that the school was a better place as a result of the way pupils' views were embedded within the ethos of the school.



## k. Assessment of the Impact of Each Pupil Voice Activity

### i. Ladders of Participation

As outlined earlier in Chapter 5 (p109) I made use of both Hart's Ladder of Participation (1997, p41) and then that of Flutter and Rudduck (2004, p16) in order to assess the level of involvement that was occurring within the school. In using these measures I was encouraged to consider each activity in detail and the results of this assessment process is given in Table 20 below. I had suggested earlier (p110) that an increase would indicate that pupil voice activities were becoming more embedded within the school and the figures shown in Table 20 would indicate this was the case. However, it is worth remembering that Hart didn't see activities as being 'increasingly superior', what was more important was that there was an appropriate match between the activity and pupils' level of engagement. Nevertheless, it can be seen that pupils are engaging at a relatively high level.

**Table 20: Assessment of Pupil Voice Activities 2007 – 2010**

ACTIVITY	Page(s)	Ladder of Participation Ratings	
		Hart	Flutter & Rudduck
Year 1: 2007 - 2008			
i. Re-organisation of the School Council	110 - 112	4	2
ii. PARs developing School Newspaper	112 - 113	6	3
iii. Pupils as Young Sports Leaders	113 - 115	5	2
iv. Input into School Travel Plan	115 - 116	5	1/2
v. Notion of pupil feedback into lessons raised	116	n/a	0
Year 2: 2008 - 2009			
i a) PARs input into the play park	120 - 122	6	4
b) Young Sports Leaders	122 - 123	6/7	2/4
ii a) Development of the Pupil Charter	123 - 125	6	4+
b) Video and Photographic Policy	125 - 126	5	4
c) Pupil Enterprise – jewellery making	127	7	4+
d) Feedback into Teaching and Learning	128	5	3/4
e) Curriculum Input	128	5	3/4
Year 3: 2009 - 2010			
i. a) Enterprise – Smoothie Week	135 - 136	6	4
b) PARs – input into new building	136 - 137	6	3/4
c) Feedback into Teaching and Learning	137 - 138	5	3/4
d) Input into the Curriculum	138 - 139	6	3/4
ii. a) SNAG	140	6	4
b) Leaflet for Refugee Week	140 - 141	6	4
c) Annual Pupil Questionnaire Reviewed	141 - 142	8	4+

Turning to look at the way in which the activities have been assessed against Flutter and Rudduck's scale, which did place increased value on the higher level activities, by the end of the final year of the research the minimum score achieved was a 3/4 which also indicated a significant level of involvement. In both cases, it is not just the increase in the scores of each activity which supports the belief that pupil voice has become more embedded throughout the school, it is the range and frequency of these activities.

Whilst the application of these Ladders as a measure is not perfect, their use has provided a basic structure against which the level of pupil participation can be assessed and as such they are offered for this purpose within this research.

## **I. External Assessments**

### **i. Ofsted**

Just prior to the start of the research period the school was visited by Ofsted and underwent a Section 5 Inspection. As a result the school was graded as 'Satisfactory with Good Features' and this external grading was one of the reasons that staff collectively felt the need for change within the school and were thus open to new ideas. During the final year of the research, the school was once again the subject of a Section 5 Inspection, thus allowing for one form of comparison to be made of the school's effectiveness by an external body. It should however be noted that the criteria which Ofsted used for the 2010 Inspection was arguably more demanding than that which was used in the previous Inspection in 2007. Indeed, when Ofsted (2010) issued a report outlining the data for the first 4 months of the new framework, covering September to December 2009, it also published the accompanying report NR-2010-13 to provide context for these findings, which showed that just over half the schools inspected within this time were 'Satisfactory' or 'Inadequate'. This report stated:

"The findings reflect Ofsted's sharper focus on weaker schools and confirm that by emphasising the overall achievement of all pupils, in particular their progress as well as the quality of classroom teaching and

learning, Ofsted is providing the additional challenge to schools that the new inspections were intended to provide.” (Ofsted (2010a) p1)

There has been some criticism that the new criteria were initially applied rather too stringently during this period and as the school’s inspection was carried out 3 days after this period, it is safe to assume that the criteria were applied in the same way here. There is some additional evidence to support this – whilst the school was graded ‘Good’ in the 2010 Inspection (2010b), with many comments from the team referring to ‘very good practice’, this judgement did not go as far as to formally recognise the 4 aspects which have consistently been rated as ‘Outstanding’ by our Local Authority Inspection Team.

At a time when a not inconsiderable number of schools were achieving less well under the new Ofsted framework, the school had not only maintained its previous grade but had considerably improved upon it. The following quotes are typical from the report, and reflect the pupil-centred work within the school:

“Developing all pupils’ self-esteem, respect for others and sense of responsibility is central to the school’s work and is reflected well in the day-to-day life of the school” (Ofsted (2010b) p6)

“Pupils have a developing influence on what happens in school.” (ibid, p4)

“Pupils willingly take on roles as mediators to support friendship problems, as playground helpers and as school council members..” (ibid, p3)

“The curriculum contributes to the pupils’ good achievement by offering a wide range of challenging and creative activities which are increasingly well matched to their interests and abilities.” (ibid, p6)

“The school provides many activities which enrich pupils’ learning and there is a strong focus on enterprise activities, such as a Dragon’s Den event.” (ibid, p6)

In addition, during the Inspection the team conduct a questionnaire with parents and carers, the result of which is remarked under the heading “Views of Parents and Carers”. Within this section, the report notes that parents and carers:

“..comment especially upon the way children are encouraged to respect one another and the range of activities offered to pupils. Parents and carers are also strongly supportive of the leadership and management of the school, the quality of teaching and the way the school meets their children’s needs.” (ibid, p8)

thus indicating that parents/carers recognise and appreciate the high quality teaching and learning environment provided by the school embedded within a culture of trust and respect.

## **ii. Local Education Authority**

As mentioned, whilst the comments from Ofsted were a clear indication that the school had made considerable improvements in many areas from the previous inspection, the Local Authority had assessed the school as being even better, grading some aspects as ‘Outstanding’. The autumn report from the School Improvement Partner included the following judgements: “*Xxxx Primary is a good school with some outstanding features*”; “*..ECM outcomes are outstanding*” and “*The school continues to evaluate opportunities to enhance all aspects of pupils’ personal development , some of which are outstanding.*” In addition, the Unicef Adviser for the Rights Respecting Award has encouraged other schools to visit us, drawing on our practice as she too believes we have some outstanding practice which she is encouraging us to share with others.

## **iii. External Awards**

Throughout the research it had seemed clear that in order for the development of pupil voice to be successful, it required staff to respect the views and opinions of the pupils by listening to them, whilst pupils also needed to show respect to the staff and to their peers by providing feedback and offering ideas with an awareness of the thoughts of others. The comments provided above would suggest that the school had successfully embraced this notion of respect and embedded it firmly within its ethos and culture. Further external validation for this,

and for the rich and varied curriculum it provides for pupils may be seen by the number of awards the school has gained, as it currently holds the following:

- \* Unicef Rights Respecting Award
- \* Investing in Children Award
- \* Impetus Award for Shared Values in Action
- \* Arts Mark Gold
- \* Young Enterprise Centre of Excellence
- \* Durham LA Anti-bullying Accreditation
- \* National Healthy School Award
- \* Becta ICT Award
- \* National Activemark
- \* Teacher Learning Academy School
- \* International School Award (Full)
- \* FMSiS

Many of the above awards required a rigorous assessment process by assessors who often had no connection to the school. In virtually all feedback sessions in the last 18 months, external assessors have commented on the warm feeling within the school, the respect members of the school community openly display to one-another, the extent to which pupils are involved in many aspects of school life and the rich, exciting curriculum experienced by pupils. The following quotes, from a range of external awards, add further support to the view that the school ethos is extremely supportive of pupil voice within school:

**a) Unicef Rights Respecting School Award Assessment Report (July 2009)**

The Operational Manager for the Unicef Rights Respecting School Award visited the school with the RRSA Project Manager in order to assess the school for the above award. Following the visit, they compiled a detailed report providing a good indication of the ethos of the school. The following are quotes from this report:

“Active pupil participation and involvement in decision-making is a strong aspect of school ethos and practice. The school Council, made up of representatives from each year group, explained their role as being *“to make the school better”, “to think of ideas, put them together and make them happen”*.  
(RRSAAR (July 2009) p4)

The following comment referred to the Pupil Charter, given as Appendix 9:

“The respect Charter, the result of a great deal of discussion and redrafting by pupils, was exemplary, and sets the standard for other Durham schools.” (ibid, p2)

whilst the strong focus on equality was also recognised:

“Parents told us that gender equality is a strong ethos with the school, as is race equality, based on *“everyone having respect for each other.”* *“Children don’t see difference in race”* voiced one parent, whilst pupils spoke in terms of *“everyone being the same – we’re all children.”* At lunch time we observed a little girl, who happened to have a physical disability, playing football as usual, with a group of older boys, without drawing any attention or remarks from her peers.” (ibid, p3)

and finally, this comment attests to pupil involvement in teaching and learning:

“Pupils are actively encouraged to provide feedback on their learning... There was also a Year 5 ‘Our Thoughts Board’ with examples of feedback from children on their learning experience of Britain since 1930.” (ibid, p3)

#### **b) Investing in Children Evaluation (December 2009)**

An External Assessor for the Investing in Children organisation visited the school on two occasions in the autumn term and met with the various pupil groups who operate within the school. These included the School Council, Pupils as Researchers, the Enterprise Group, and members from the Buddies, Mini-buds and Mediators. Following the visit, the assessor produced a 4 page report which included the following comments:

“There are several mechanisms for the children and young people to be involved in dialogue and change at Xxxxx Primary School. The various groups and the school council play an important role in shaping school life. Their voices are taken seriously by the teachers and management

and this is evident whilst talking to them and with the success they have had. When I asked if they feel they are listened to everyone said “**Yes**”.

(liCE (December 2009) p4)

The report highlighted some of the work of the PARs, including quotes from the assessor’s discussions with the children:

“During my visit I met with the PARs who have been working as pupil researchers for the past year. *“We found out information to support the playground action group with their bid to get funds so children in Newton Hall can have a new park.... We had to do a questionnaire which we worked on for a long time and took it round each class to ask pupils what they thought.... We then put all the data together. We then visited a few schools and different parks to look at different equipment... After the visits we presented our findings.”*” (ibid, p3)

It also confirmed that pupils are involved in shaping the curriculum:

“The children have the opportunity to choose what they learn at Xxxxx Primary school. For example the children have been involved in choosing which topic they would like to work on. Class 5 chose to look at Victorians and decided what they wanted to know.” (ibid, p4)

As mentioned previously, the Investing in Children assessment process relies on the assessor meeting with groups of children to gather evidence and the report reflects this. It outlines many examples of changes which have occurred within the school *“as a result of dialogue at the school”* (ibid, p2) and this final comment explains how involvement can change the perceptions of those pupils involved:

“When you’re on the school council you notice things more.. what *you* think should be changed and you get to do something about it.” (ibid, p2)

This indicates that involvement in pupil voice activities can help pupils to become more interested in their environment and ultimately more empowered to change those things which they think may need to be changed.

### **c) Investing in Children Evaluation (January 2011)**

It is perhaps worth adding that as the Investing in Children is an annual award, the school was re-assessed in the autumn term 2010, with a new report issued in January 2011. Whilst this fell outside the research period, with comments from this report much the same as those above, the report also provides some corroboration of the work carried out by pupils during the final year of the research period. It included the following remarks verifying the part played by pupils in the design of the new building:

“Children were also involved in designing parts of the new school. They asked other children what coloured pegs each class wanted and each class got their own colour. The children were also asked what they wanted to go on the walls and the children liked the idea of picture frames that could include photos of the children working and pictures of their work.”  
(liCE (January 2011) p2)

Whilst the following remarks are confirmation of some of the work carried out by the Student Nutrition Action Group (SNAG) during this final year:

“The children are active with finding out what children think of school food. They said that they asked children what they wanted to have during meal times and they met with the kitchen staff and discussed what they could and could not do. A new menu was created. “  
(ibid, p2)

### **d) Anti-bullying Re-Accreditation (January 2011)**

The Durham Anti-bullying Accreditation scheme covers a 2 year period and the most recent assessment was carried out in autumn 2010, with the report produced on 7<sup>th</sup> January 2011. The assessors looked at evidence from the last two years (autumn 2008 – autumn 2010) and made the following comments stating that the school involves young people actively in anti-bullying systems, well supported by: *“a well established Buddy Scheme within school.”* (ABR-A (January 2011), p1). In addition, it helps pupils to understand all aspects of bullying through an awareness raising day and through *“excellent information sharing with all groups.”* (ibid, p2). When outlining the areas of strength within the school, it specifically mentioned that *“the school has maintained a high standard of support to pupils*



*and parents alike” (ibid, p2) and that “it is very apparent that anti-bullying is embedded throughout the whole school” (ibid, p3).*

These comments indicate that the school is committed to providing a safe and supportive ethos for its pupils and that this is achieved, in part, by involving pupils in a range of tasks from carrying out roles of responsibility to participating in awareness raising activities.

#### **e) Summary**

The above comments, from a range of external sources, provide evidence of the increased involvement of pupils within school along with the more positive ethos developed throughout the school during the three years of the research period.

# **CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSIONS**

## **a. Introduction**

This thesis set out to analyse the development of pupil voice activities in a one-form entry primary school over a period of three years, looking at the attitudes of staff and outcomes for pupils whilst attempting to discern whether this development could help improve the quality of teaching and learning in classrooms. The research took the form of a small scale study and as such I make no claims as to the wide-scale generalisability of it. However, this thesis did analyse the gradual development of pupil voice in some detail over an extensive period, showing how the school moved from one which paid little attention to the views of pupils to one which took on board pupils' views about a range of issues including the environment, the curriculum, teaching and learning. It has looked at how the perspectives of staff, both teaching and non-teaching, have changed, and how the level of skill and confidence in pupils has developed, whilst outlining how the school has adapted its approach to almost every aspect, including teaching and learning and the curriculum, to take account of the views of the pupils and staff. Within the realm of pupil voice literature such a detailed account appears to be missing and this thesis aims to contribute to the body of knowledge by addressing this. It is hoped that the suggestions presented within this work will provide some degree of transferability to other primary schools wishing to embrace pupil voice themselves. As some of my findings are supported by the work of other researchers in this area, this may also add weight to the transferability of this work.

## **b. Challenges Presented During the Study**

Whilst undertaking this work I have been faced with two distinct challenges. Firstly, literature relating to pupil voice is overwhelmingly positive with studies outlining the benefits that can be gained for pupils, staff and schools. Whilst these may suggest that certain conditions need to be in place before development in this area can occur, I have yet to encounter even one study claiming that pupil voice is

detrimental to education. This then may lead some to the mistaken assumption that pupil voice is some sort of educational panacea and as such should be embraced by all those committed to school improvement. For whilst pupil voice has the potential to produce many benefits, schools have to be ready to embrace these changes and staff in particular have to be confident enough in their own ability and position so they feel comfortable engaging with pupils. This study offers a detailed report of the steps taken by one school as it has gradually embraced pupil voice and firmly embedded this within its ethos and may provide a helpful guide to other schools wishing to embark on a similar journey whilst contributing to the body of knowledge in this area.

The second challenge relates to my own position within the school as both head teacher and participant researcher as this raised the issues of reliability and validity. I have attempted to address this in a number of ways as set out in Chapter 3, and so have:

- recorded and transcribed interviews to aid reliability
- triangulated responses
- checked findings with participants to achieve a degree of respondent validation.

I also tried to promote a climate of trust and respect, encouraging staff to share their thoughts honestly and to come to believe that their own views were being considered too. I am aware that some may feel I had a vested interest, as a researcher, in ensuring that this project produced positive results. However, as previously mentioned, my research would have been truly unique had I reported more negative findings, perhaps indicating that pupil voice activities could have a harmful affect on schools and those within them. This would have enabled me to produce ground-breaking work, potentially of greater interest to the academic world. However, this is not the case and throughout the research period I have strived to achieve reliability, to ensure that findings are reported honestly and with a high level of integrity and so I transcribed all thirty-six interviews in full including these as Appendices 3 and 4, along with the eight questionnaire summaries, given as Appendices 5, 6 and 7. A careful analysis of these ought to reveal that participants responded consistently throughout each interview, and with veracity. Moreover, these responses should give a clear picture not only of the changing views and attitudes of staff, pupils and parents, but also the transforming ethos of the school.

Assessing each activity against both Hart's Ladder of Participation (1997) and that of Flutter and Rudduck (2004) indicates the extent to which pupil voice has become embedded within the school whilst further support for the validation of the findings has been provided by reports from external assessors, given in Chapter 5. Additional challenges which may face head teachers developing a democratic approach have been outlined by Trafford (1997) many of which focus on managing the relationships of those involved (p87). I have chosen not to focus on these in isolation during my research preferring instead look at the development holistically.

### **c. Advantages of Participant Research into Pupil Voice**

Whilst there are undoubted drawbacks with participant research, I have encountered some benefits which I had not anticipated. Firstly, as a participant researcher I was able to ensure that the development of pupil voice activities continued throughout the research period and did not wane. Secondly, I found that recording the interviews brought the unexpected benefit of helping staff to feel much more involved in the process, to believe that their views were important and thus to counter one of the initial concerns about the development of pupil voice - that staff may feel that more credence is given to the views of the pupils than to their own. The staff were interviewed either 2 or 3 times individually and their opinions were carefully listened to, for 7 or 8 minutes each time. Whilst I believe that we are an open and listening school, staff have seldom been invited to talk in so much detail on a one-to-one basis about any subject.

Additionally, in an attempt to achieve respondent validation, I discussed responses with participants to ensure these accurately reflected their opinions and to my knowledge this had not happened before. The whole experience was a positive one for staff as they felt valued and able to explore their thoughts and ideas which in turn encouraged staff to think more deeply about pupil voice. Whilst having been listened to in itself would have been good, the fact that staff could see their responses were helping to shape the pace and direction of the development was even more positive as it demonstrated to staff that their views too were important to the school and that this initiative was something they were fully involved in rather than something that was happening to them.

## **d. Review of the Research Questions**

In order to review the development of pupil voice in this one-form entry school, this research set out to address the following questions, first given on pp17 - 18:

1. Do pupil voice activities change a school culture?
2. Can the development of pupil voice within a school help move a school from a performance driven culture to a pupil-centred learning culture?
3. Does the growth of pupil voice activities have a positive or negative impact on staff?

### **i. Do Pupil Voice Activities Change a School Culture?**

At the beginning of the research period it was reported that the school took little account of the views of pupils and certainly the initial interviews and questionnaires indicated that there were few activities which involved pupil input at this time. I joined the school in 2006, when the only pupil voice activity was the School Council, which was subsequently reorganised during the first year of the research period. In the academic year 2006-2007 the Pupils as Researchers (PARs) group was established within school, which brought the total number of activities to 2. Table 21 below shows the steady growth in the number of activities during the three years of the research period:

**Table 21: Number of Pupil Voice Activities 2006 – 2010**

DATE	NO. OF ACTIVITIES
Pre 2006	1
2006 – 2007	2
2007 – 2008	5
2008 – 2009	8
2009 - 2010	12

whilst Table 22 below sets out the wide range of activities into which pupils have had some input during this time:

**Table 22: Pupil Involvement in Aspects of School Life**

ASPECT	ACTIVITY
Input into teaching and learning	Pupils providing some feedback to teachers about how a lesson has gone, how they best learn and which strategies used are most effective.
Shaping the Curriculum	Pupils throughout the school are shaping the curriculum by determining what it is they want to learn about within a topic and the ways in which they would like to learn it.
Resources	PARs surveying pupils about new resources for pupils to use during break times. Y6 pupils writing to companies for sponsorship to obtain new rugby kit. Helping support appeal to develop a new local play park.
Input into the building and premises	PARs: significant input into new school signage; design of new cloakrooms; determining what sort of display to have in corridor areas; deciding on outside equipment.
Input into School Meals	Student Nutrition Action Group survey pupils to find out what they'd like, represent their requests and work with catering staff to adapt menus. SNAG Liaise with catering staff to adapt lunch routines ensuring lunchtimes run more smoothly.
Pupils set up and run an Enterprise activity	Pupils set up jewellery making business, selling a variety of items (including some bespoke items) throughout the year at school events and also one day a week at break time. (They enter and win the Primary Enterprise Challenge in Durham.)
Supporting the behaviour policy of the school	Buddies, Mini-buds, Mediators, Y4 Playground Helpers help promote school behaviour code, providing support for those in need of friendship. School Council draws up Pupil Charters.
Input into the Annual Pupil Questionnaire	PARs initiate and take responsibility for redesigning the Pupil Questionnaire for Infants.
Input into Governor Policy	Governors ask pupils for their views in order to review the school Video and Photographic policy.
Input into Newsletters and Governors' Meetings	Pupil Groups providing input into newsletters about pupil voice activities and provide reports for Governor Meetings.
Input into the School Travel Plan	KS2 members of the School Council have input into the school travel plan.
Input into Sports Events	Y5 Young Sports Leaders helping to run the Mini Olympics for KS1 pupils from a few schools.
Supporting the work of the PTA	Pupils in Y5 and Y6 writing to organisations asking for prizes or donations for school fairs.
Supporting the work of our Local Authority	Y5 PARs write & produce information leaflet which was distributed throughout the city (and school) during Durham Refugee Week.

As can be seen, there are few areas where pupils have not had an input, particularly when a comparison is made with the activities identified in the 2008 Staff Questionnaire as those which staff thought pupils may eventually become involved with in school. From these, only two have *not* occurred: input into financial decisions (other than Enterprise work) and participation in the interview process for new staff. Pupils have not currently been involved in these areas due to the school's desire to avoid tokenism or pupil involvement at a superficial level. This is not to suggest that pupils may never have input into these specific areas, rather, at this time it has not been deemed appropriate. It is important that this is acknowledged, particularly since pupil voice within the school has continued to develop as the level of mutual trust, respect and understanding has evolved over the three year research period. During this time, staff have tried to ensure that pupils are not led to believe that they have more influence or control than they actually have – for all participants have come to accept two points. Firstly, pupils are clear about the degree of input they can expect to have within school, while sure that within these areas their views will be taken seriously and not brushed aside without appropriate consideration and secondly, pupils and adults treat each other with respect: adults strive to ensure they neither patronise pupils nor promote tokenism, giving time to pupils to enable them to share their ideas and expertise, whilst pupils provide feedback with a degree of sensitivity, always trying to avoid rudeness, understanding that not all their suggestions are feasible.

Whilst this may seem quite straightforward, achieving a climate of trust and respect within a school can be anything but – so how did we achieve this? At the start of this research project, staff did not take much account of pupils' views, nor did they actively encourage pupils to speak freely, thus the prevailing culture was more adult-centred than pupil-centred. However, they *were* receptive to change and willing to take on new approaches. Having started to appreciate how effective the Pupils as Researchers group was proving to be, staff began to understand that pupils may have more to offer than they previously considered. This is clear when we revisit the questions posed by Fielding (2001, pp100 & 102) outlined on p56. Within school there are now a range of pupil action groups providing input and insight into various aspects including school meals, the interior and exterior of the school, school policy, the work of the PTA, the curriculum as well as teaching and learning. Whilst not all pupils are involved in all activities, there are mechanisms to

ensure that all pupils can express their views if they wish. These include Class Suggestion Boxes, Circle Time, Family Groups, Post It notes for curriculum/topic ideas and an open climate where pupils are encouraged to speak and adults are ready to listen. As far as possible, staff work hard to ensure all pupils can speak, to whichever adult is most appropriate, not just their own teacher, about whatever issue they want. This is encouraged through staff working with pupils in a number of ways: different staff are responsible for areas such as Buddies, Mediators, Mini-Buds, PARs, and the School Council, whilst the caretaker manages many of the sports teams etc. We encourage pupils to use the language they are comfortable with to state their views or raise issues that concern them – in other words, to express their ideas in pupil-friendly language. However, we also teach them to develop vocabulary which can help describe their research work so that their findings can be appropriately expressed and taken seriously. This serves to empower the pupils.

As a one-form entry school, it is possible for every member of staff to know every pupil, and we encourage this community feel within our school which would not exist if staff were not willing to listen. This willingness comes from the fact that staff *want* to listen because they believe it is important, not just because they are expected to and so there are opportunities for pupils and staff to engage in real dialogue. One example of this is the way pupils, *all* pupils, have a substantial input into the curriculum, thus it is clear that the culture within the school has changed significantly. Indeed, as the number and range of pupil voice activities increased over the research period, so did the degree of mutual trust and respect existing between staff and pupils and these two factors became inter-related; as mutual trust and respect grew so did the range of opportunities open to pupils, culminating in pupil feedback into teaching, learning and the curriculum.

It is evident from the evidence presented above that the culture of the school has clearly changed over the last three years, with pupils much more involved in a number of areas throughout school and staff, not merely tolerating, but also actively listening and welcoming the input pupils can have. As many of these changes have come about through the growth of pupil voice I would surmise that this development has indeed changed our school culture.



## ii. Can Pupil Voice Help Develop a Pupil-Centred Learning Culture?

Whilst it is clear that the school has become more pupil-centred, what is under consideration here is whether it has become a 'pupil-centred learning culture'. At the beginning of this work (p41) I referred to a set of values given by Fink (2006) which can help create a '*learning-centred school*' and central to those are trust and respect, which have been explored in some detail in Section 1 above. The increase of activities set out in Table 21 is certainly an indication that pupils have become much more central to the core purpose of the school and this is supported by Table 22 which shows the range of these activities. A major change within school during this time relates to the input pupils have had into teaching, learning and the curriculum, with pupils providing feedback to teachers about the lessons they have experienced. Teachers started out by asking pupils to give feedback on the success of a lesson with indications such as 'thumbs up/thumbs down', gradually moving on to more sophisticated approaches, for example questions like 'if I taught this lesson again, what might I do differently?'. As outlined in the previous chapter, teachers remain very much in control of this process, determining *when* they decide to ask for feedback, thus able to choose whether or not to elicit feedback from lessons which have not gone so well, if of course this should happen! Feedback from teachers involved in this research project has shown that as they have got used to asking pupils for feedback, and have come to trust and respect their responses, they have become more confident to ask pupils about those lessons which have gone less well. This has helped them to fine tune their teaching to meet their pupils' needs, thus enhancing their teaching skills.

Arguably an even more exciting development to occur within the school has been the shift which has occurred surrounding topic planning. At the start of the research period, teachers decided what was taught when, throughout the curriculum. Now, whilst teachers largely decide the topics covered in order to ensure appropriate whole-school curriculum coverage, it is the pupils who largely determine *what* they learn and *how*. This has resulted in pupils being much more motivated and involved in their learning, whilst teachers themselves have also become more enthusiastic and inspired as the pupils have often taken them in directions they had not previously considered. This has been particularly true for those teachers who are teaching a particular topic for the second or third time - instead of a topic becoming a little stale, input from pupils has refreshed it, making the topic new and more exciting as they plan the learning journey together.

Both these developments came about as part of the long-term development of pupil voice within the school, and as a result, teachers have become much more focussed on making their teaching more relevant and exciting to the children. There has been a clear shift from a culture where teachers themselves decide what should be taught and how (within government guidelines, of course), to one where teachers focus on the needs and interests of the pupils and involve them in the planning and delivery of the learning. Further evidence to support this has been provided by a variety of external assessments made of the school by Ofsted, Unicef and the like (see pp 150 – 157) who have indicated that children are actively involved in their own learning, provide feedback about their teaching and help shape the curriculum. This clearly indicates that pupil voice can indeed move a school from a performance driven culture to a pupil-centred learning culture.

### **iii. What Impact Does the Growth of Pupil Voice Have on Staff?**

The growth of any initiative in school generally has some sort of impact on staff, either positively or negatively. The development of pupil voice was the most significant and prolonged initiative to take place in recent memory, lasting more than three years and, as we have seen above, touching on nearly every aspect of school life. This research study collected the views of both teaching and non-teaching staff in school during this period and noted the following:

#### **a) Teaching Staff**

Teachers initially showed some concern about the extent to which pupils may become involved in decision-making in school. Whilst relatively comfortable with pupils being involved in decisions about resources, they were less secure with the notion that pupils may become involved with input into teaching, learning and the curriculum and gave a few reasons for their concern. By the end of the research period however, all teachers had seen the advantages of inviting pupils to provide feedback into those areas and were positive about the outcomes. In Chapter 5 (p130) I raised three additional questions, the first of which was *Why have the teachers become more open to the development of pupil voice?* I believe they changed their views because they were experiencing the benefits of pupil involvement first hand and the importance of this should not be underestimated. In addition, change was gradual, starting small and building up over three years, with some attempt made to take account of the readiness, or otherwise, of the staff.

Whilst this supports the development of pupil voice, it doesn't address the issue of control which was raised throughout the research period by staff in both the questionnaires and interviews where they expressed concern about possible loss of control. Reviewing the activities pupils have become involved in, realistically there were few which could really pose a threat to teacher control. The two most obvious are feedback into teaching and input into the curriculum. As mentioned above, it is still the teachers who determine when to ask for feedback, and so they remain in control of that aspect. Input into the curriculum can be considered in the same way – whilst pupils can suggest a wide range of activities and strategies, ultimately the teacher can decide which of these to select and if necessary, provide reasons for rejecting some. This may suggest that within these activities, pupil voice is operating at a superficial level and it is impossible to deny that this could be the case. However, the frequency with which teachers regularly ask for feedback into lessons, and the close match between all those ideas posted by pupils to those activities completed by the end of a topic would suggest otherwise.

I conclude that, for teachers, the feeling that they could ultimately control those areas which may challenge their professionalism, if they chose, was a contributing factor to their subsequent willingness to not only support, but also embrace, the development of pupil voice within the school. Given the degree to which pupils are able to have an input into teaching, the curriculum and so many other aspects of school, this seems a small price to pay for the subsequent success of this project.

#### **b) Non-teaching Staff**

Initially, non-teaching staff were generally more positive about the concept of involving pupils in aspects of school life, identifying more clear benefits and fewer potential problems than teachers at this point. However, by the end of the research period they still displayed concern about the input pupils could have into teaching and learning, with some stating that this was the responsibility of the teachers. There seemed to be an underlying belief that teachers should be making the decisions and remain in control of what happened within the classroom. However, over the course of the research, non-teaching staff came to appreciate that pupils could have a useful input into the curriculum, although this response came from a specific question added when staff did not mention this in the open question. As non-teaching staff also failed to indicate that feedback into teaching and learning

was beneficial it would suggest that either they didn't believe this or had not considered it.

### **c) Conclusions**

Both the non-teaching and teaching staff gradually involved pupils in more aspects of school life as the research period continued, but whilst the teachers came to value the role pupils had to play in terms of input into teaching and the curriculum, non-teaching staff remained slightly less convinced and, unlike the teachers, did not immediately identify this as one of the benefits which the development of pupil voice had brought about. This is perhaps because they were not as directly involved in the planning and delivery of these aspects as the teachers were. It may also reflect the differing roles that teachers and non-teaching staff have within school: teachers were generally more focussed on teaching and the curriculum and when asked for advantages, these aspects immediately came to mind, whilst non-teaching staff didn't initially identify either of these, focusing more on the general advantages pupil voice had brought to school.

However, the second question posed in Chapter 5 was: *Are the views of non-teaching staff restricted by underlying fears of loss of control?* and so it is worth considering whether it may also be because they were more focussed on the issue of control, particularly as they cited in some responses that the teachers should retain control of curriculum and teaching related decisions. This is in contrast to the responses of the teachers who seemed increasingly less concerned about this as the research period continued – possibly because their relationship with pupils had strengthened during this time as trust and respect had developed. It is difficult to give a conclusive answer to the question raised – whilst a fear of loss of control may be at least partly responsible, an alternative solution may be even more straightforward. It is possible that the non-teaching staff simply retain a traditional view of the roles of teachers and pupils, which holds that teachers are firmly in control of teaching and learning. Thus, whilst the non-teaching staff are open-minded about pupil input to other areas within school, including, for some, the curriculum, they perhaps found input into teaching a step too far. Unfortunately, it is difficult to determine which of the two solutions offered is correct (if indeed either one is), as the questions asked within the research period did not focus on this area specifically enough to reach a definite conclusion.

The last question posed in Chapter 5 also related to non-teaching staff and was: *Will the views of non-teaching staff change over time as they see teachers embrace pupil voice activities in school?* Once more it is difficult to give a conclusive answer to this question, although analysis of the interviews carried out with the non-teaching staff over the three years (given as Appendix 4) show increasingly positive responses, indicating that their views were changing. In addition, whilst they did not generally alter their opinions about pupil input into teaching, as discussed above, they did change their views over the course of the research about pupil input into the curriculum.

To summarise, the development of pupil voice has had a positive impact on both teaching and non-teaching staff, who have come to appreciate the value of pupil input into many aspects of school life. After some initial concerns related to loss of control, teachers have reported that pupil feedback has helped enhance both their teaching and the curriculum they offer pupils. Non-teaching staff, despite the limitations raised above, have clearly indicated that pupil voice has had a positive impact on many aspects of school life. All staff have indicated their belief that pupil voice has had a positive impact on the ethos of the school.

## **e. What Next?**

### **i. Future Development in this School**

Those pupils engaged with pupil voice activities have been developing a wide range of skills and attributes as the scope of these activities has increased, partly as a result of some pupils initiating activities themselves. Their expectations have risen and pupils have displayed both initiative and organisational skills by presenting well thought out plans indicating how they intend to achieve their objectives. Thus far, staff responses have been positive, but if pupil-initiated activities continue to rise at the current rate, it may pose problems in terms of manageability. Whilst staff may be able to find an answer to this, in the spirit of pupil voice development, a more appropriate solution may be to present the problem (if it indeed becomes one) to the pupils themselves and let them decide.

The two aspects where pupils do not yet have input, as indicated earlier, concerned money and involvement in staff selection. It remains unclear at the time of writing whether this will ever be the case, but it certainly remains a possibility that pupils could play a part in both by at least having their views considered, although careful preparation would need to be made first.

## **ii. Transferring to Secondary School**

As has been shown, primary aged pupils are capable of participating in decision-making at quite a sophisticated level, and as time has progressed their level of expectation has risen. However, whilst this may be commendable, one concern which cannot be ignored is whether by developing these transferable skills we are really preparing pupils appropriately for their future lives or simply setting them up for disappointment as they progress to secondary school. Whilst it cannot be argued that unless the secondary school places importance on the development of pupil voice and takes note of recent government guidelines, there may well be fewer opportunities for participation, the fact that at least some pupils have initiated activities themselves at primary school may suggest that they will continue to do so at secondary. If this happens there is every chance that at least one department within the secondary school may begin to develop pupil voice themselves – and from a small beginning, anything is possible. Clearly primary schools have a role to play by sharing their experiences as pupils transfer and offering support and guidance to those secondary schools willing to engage.

## **f. Final Conclusions**

This thesis examined the development of pupil voice activities, noting the extent to which the school moved from an organisation where pupils' views were infrequently sought, generally over minor matters, to one in which pupils have a much greater say into more significant issues – thus beginning to shape their own learning experiences within school.

### **i. Factors Contributing to Success**

At the beginning of the research, staff had acknowledged that there was a need for change and this was significant as it resulted in a more open attitude to new ideas than might otherwise have been the case. The introduction of pupil voice

development gained further support from staff when they were able to observe the positive impact the Pupils as Researchers group had before there was any expectation on their part. Clearly staff were ready for this development and as they became involved in pupil voice activities themselves, their willingness to participate further increased, as did their commitment, culminating in teachers being willing to engage in pupil input into teaching and the curriculum.

It is important to acknowledge that trust and respect between all participants has been central to the success of pupil voice development and is inter-related: as trust and respect between participants has grown, so has the number and range of pupil voice activities; and as the number of activities has increased, so also has the degree of trust and respect. This has required commitment from both pupils and staff and it should be noted that to achieve this, it was crucial that staff participants, both teachers and non-teachers, felt *their* views were being considered too. This was partly achieved through the annual interviews carried out as part of the research, which enabled staff to express their opinions in some detail. However, listening to their views would not have achieved this alone, the fact that staff could see that their comments were having an impact in shaping the scope, direction and pace of the research was crucial.

As with the growth of trust and respect within a school, the development of pupil voice takes time. MacBeath et al. (2008) stated within their conclusions, there are 'no quick fixes', a view which is fully supported by this research which covers a time span of over three years – from the introduction of Pupils as Researchers in the Spring of 2007 through to the Summer of 2010. The pace of the development was mainly dictated by the responses of both staff, from their interview and questionnaire responses, and pupils, through their involvement in those opportunities presented to them as well as those they initiated themselves. Given the success of this project, it would seem that this was appropriate.

The main issue raised as a concern at the outset of this research was that of control, or rather fear of loss of control. Whilst staff have come to ask pupils for their input into teaching, learning and the curriculum and evidence has shown that they take account of these views, a closer analysis suggests that staff were still able to exert some control in this area if they so wish, by choosing when to ask

pupils for their input. This factor may be an underlying reason for the success of this project but should not detract from its significance.

## **ii. Summary of the Main Findings**

The main findings of this research shows that the development of pupils voice within school:

- led to pupils being much more involved in many aspects of school life. Serious consideration was given to their views, although pupils understood that not all their ideas or suggestions could be acted upon.
- helped the school become a pupil-centred learning organisation where the needs of all participants, staff and pupils, were respected and acknowledged. Pupils had much greater input into the curriculum, and were encouraged to identify what they wanted to learn within a topic and how they want to learn it.
- encouraged teachers to ask for feedback into teaching and learning, using these responses to make their teaching even more effective, through stimulating questions and an open climate of trust and respect.
- had a positive impact on staff who found that it made their teaching more interesting and enjoyable. Pupils became more engaged and the activities around the school have raised teachers' aspirations as to what pupils were capable of in terms of making a contribution to their school community – both as active participants in the learning process and as co-contributors to the organisational needs of their school community.
- promoted and supported a culture of trust and respect throughout the school community, thus enhancing the ethos of the school.

These findings clearly indicate that the increase in pupil voice activities has had a positive impact on the school: pupils were more involved in decision-making and in shaping the direction of the school, including teaching and learning. This appears to have been welcomed by parents, teachers and pupils alike. The school's pupil-centred approach was acknowledged by a variety of external bodies such as Ofsted and Unicef, through their Rights Respecting Award.

Staff were comfortable with consulting pupils over the content and direction of their topic planning and teachers embraced the notion of obtaining feedback from pupils regarding their teaching at some level. SATs results since 2008 have been consistently above the national average and in 2010 the percentage of pupils



making 2 levels progress was the highest it had ever been. Whilst it would be wrong to attribute the increase in school performance solely to the development of pupil voice activities, it is worth noting that such activities had no detrimental effect. Indeed, inspectors from both Ofsted and our Local Authority have judged the school to be a more effective organisation.

This research contributes to the body of knowledge surrounding pupil voice by presenting a detailed study of how a primary school moved from an organisation which largely discounted the views of pupils to one where pupils were actively encouraged to speak and adults were ready to listen so that pupils' views gradually became central to the culture of the school. This included pupil input into teaching, learning and the curriculum. Within pupil voice research such an account, charting the step-by-step development, is missing and this thesis aims to address this. It should be made clear, however, that although the research describes a range of strategies employed by the school to elicit these views and the transcripts indicate a willingness on the part of adults to listen, no claim is made suggesting that the views of *all* pupils have been represented, nor that it would have been possible to achieve this despite the best efforts of the staff.

This work also contributes to our understanding of the ways in which pupil consultation can enhance not just teaching and learning within school, but the whole school experience for all those involved, both staff and pupils. The development of pupil voice activities has had a positive impact on staff through increased enthusiasm and led to increased motivation in both staff and pupils. Teaching has become more relevant and pupil-centred and there is an increased climate of trust and respect permeating throughout the school. Whilst schools wishing to embark on this journey need to be willing and prepared for the challenges ahead, this research concludes that all can learn from such a journey while the benefits that can be achieved by the whole school community are certainly worth the effort it may take. Indeed, given the greater emphasis placed on pupil input by regulating bodies such as the Department for Education and Ofsted (as outlined in Chapter 2), the question that schools should perhaps consider is not what have they got to gain by embracing pupil voice but what do they stand to lose if they don't.

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# **APPENDICES**

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# **Appendix 1**

## Durham University

### School of Education

#### Research Ethics and Data Protection Monitoring Form

Research involving humans by all academic and related Staff and Students in the Department is subject to the standards set out in the Department Code of Practice on Research Ethics. The Sub-Committee will assess the research against the British Educational Research Association's *Revised Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research* (2004).

It is a requirement that prior to the commencement of all research that this form be completed and submitted to the Department's Research Ethics and Data Protection Sub-Committee. The Committee will be responsible for issuing certification that the research meets acceptable ethical standards and will, if necessary, require changes to the research methodology or reporting strategy.

A copy of the research proposal which details methods and reporting strategies must be attached and should be no longer than two typed A4 pages. In addition you should also attach any information and consent form (written in layperson's language) you plan to use. An example of a consent form is included at the end of the code of practice.

Please send the signed application form and proposal to the Secretary of the Ethics Advisory Committee (Sheena Smith, School of Education, tel. (0191) 334 8403, e-mail: [Sheena.Smith@Durham.ac.uk](mailto:Sheena.Smith@Durham.ac.uk)). Returned applications must be either typed or word-processed and it would assist members if you could forward your form, once signed, to the Secretary as an e-mail attachment

Name:

Title of research project:

Questionnaire

		YES	NO	
1.	Does your research involve living human subjects?			IF NOT, GO TO DECLARATION AT END
2.	Does your research involve only the analysis of large, secondary and anonymised datasets?			IF YES, GO TO DECLARATION AT END
3a	Will you give your informants a written summary of your research and its uses?			If NO, please provide further details and go to 3b
3b	Will you give your informants a verbal summary of your research and its uses?			If NO, please provide further details
3c	Will you ask your informants to sign a consent form?			If NO, please provide further details
4.	Does your research involve covert surveillance (for example, participant observation)?			If YES, please provide further details.
5a	Will your information <i>automatically</i> be anonymised in your research?			If NO, please provide further details and go to 5b

5b	IF NO Will you explicitly give <i>all</i> your informants the right to remain anonymous?			If NO, why not?
6.	Will monitoring devices be used openly and only with the permission of informants?			If NO, why not?
7.	Will your informants be provided with a summary of your research findings?			If NO, why not?
8.	Will your research be available to informants and the general public without authorities restrictions placed by sponsoring authorities?			If NO, please provide further details
9.	Have you considered the implications of your research intervention on your informants?			Please provide full details
10.	Are there any other ethical issues arising from your research?			If YES, please provide further details.

Further details

Continuation sheet YES/NO (delete as applicable)

### ***Declaration***

I have read the Department's Code of Practice on Research Ethics and believe that my research complies fully with its precepts. I will not deviate from the methodology or reporting strategy without further permission from the Department's Research Ethics Committee.

Signed .....

Date:

**SUBMISSIONS WITHOUT A COPY OF THE RESEARCH PROPOSAL WILL NOT BE CONSIDERED.**

## PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM FOR STAFF

TITLE OF PROJECT:

**Developing Pupil Voice Within A Primary School: Who Benefits and Who Learns?**

*Please circle your response*

Have you read the Participant Information Sheet? YES / NO

Have you had an opportunity to ask questions and to discuss the study with Mrs. Whitton personally? YES / NO

Did you receive satisfactory answers to all of your questions? YES / NO

Have you received enough information about the study? YES / NO

Do you consent to participate in the study? YES / NO

Do you agree to your interview being recorded to facilitate a more accurate record of your views? YES / NO

Do you understand that this information will not be used for any other reason without your explicit consent? YES / NO

Do you understand that you are free to withdraw from the study at any time and without having to give a reason for withdrawal? YES / NO

**Signed** ..... **Date** .....

(NAME IN BLOCK LETTERS) .....



## PARTICIPANT INFORMATION FOR STAFF

### TITLE OF PROJECT:

#### **Developing Pupil Voice Within a Primary School: Who Benefits and Who Learns?**

I am looking at the impact of pupil voice within our primary school to determine the extent to which it may have an effect on ethos and standards. Over the next three academic years I will be monitoring the development of pupil voice activities within the school and assessing the effect they have on the ethos within the school. I will also be looking at standards to see if there is any obvious link between the increase in pupil voice activities and the achievement of pupils. It should be stated that I genuinely have no idea whether there will be any impact (positive or negative) – or whether any impact can securely be related to the growth of pupil voice activities.

Pupils will also be asked for their views on how school 'feels' to them as they become more involved in school.

Members of staff who are willing to participate will be asked for their views on pupil voice during a short (approximately 10 minute) interview at the start of the research (Autumn 2007), midway through (Summer 2009) and again at the end of the research period (Summer 2010). Staff participating will be given a verbal summary of their input to help ensure their views are correctly represented. They will also receive a verbal summary of the research and will have access to the final report.

All responses given will remain strictly anonymous and participants are free to withdraw from the process at any point.

## INFORMATION FOR GOVERNORS

### TITLE OF PROJECT:

#### **Developing Pupil Voice Within a Primary School: Who Benefits and Who Learns?**

I am looking at the impact of pupil voice within the primary school to determine the extent to which it may have an effect on ethos and standards. Over the next three academic years I will be monitoring the development of pupil voice activities within the school and assessing the effect they have on the ethos within the school. I will also be looking at standards to see if there is any obvious link between the increase in pupil voice activities and in achievement in pupils – in particular if pupils become more involved in the teaching and learning activities within the class and whether teachers feel this helps pupils to learn more effectively. Our recent Ofsted report rated our teaching within school as 'Satisfactory with Good features' and I am obviously keen to identify ways in which we might improve the overall quality of teaching and learning within the school. Performance data will be analysed to determine levels of achievement but all data will remain strictly anonymous.

Pupils will also be asked for their views on how school 'feels' to them as they become more involved in school and for their views on the development of Pupil Voice.

Members of staff who are willing to participate will be asked for their views on Pupil Voice during a short (approximately 5 - 10 minute) interview at the start of the research (Autumn 2007), midway through (Summer 2009) and again at the end of the research period (Summer 2010). Staff participating will be given a verbal summary of their input to ensure their views are correctly represented. They will also receive a verbal summary of the research and will have access to the final report.

All responses given will remain strictly anonymous and participants are free to withdraw from the process at any point.

I am hoping that this information will help our school to become more effective and an even better place to be.

## **Appendix 2**

## Semi-structured Interview Questions for Staff

**Date: Autumn 2007**

General introduction: As you know, I am interested in tracking the progress of pupil voice in our school over the next 3 years. I'd like to ask you a few questions about what you feel about pupil voice at this time, and what you think about the input pupils could have into school activities in the future. Is this all right?

SW	If you were to rate yourself on a scale of 1 to 6 where 1 was you don't think pupils should have any say at all, to 6 where you think pupils should have a great deal of say as to what goes on in school, where do you think you would place yourself at this point in time between 1 and 6?
R	
SW	What do you think the advantages of involving pupils in decisions about school could be?
R	
SW	Do you think there might be any disadvantages to doing that?
R	
SW	Can you think of any examples of this off the top of your head?
R	
SW	Are there any areas where you think pupils shouldn't be consulted? Any areas you can think of when pupils shouldn't be involved?
R	
SW	What do you think about the prospect of pupils giving feedback to their teachers on their teaching and learning? So that say a teacher delivers a lesson and the pupils are asked to give some sort of feedback to say how it's been for them. What do you think of that?
R	
SW	Looking ahead 2 years. What do you think, which of the following aspects do you think pupils will be involved with in school, like the School Council.
R	
SW	Anti-bullying Committee?
R	
SW	Curriculum decisions?
R	
SW	Planning the outdoor environment?
R	
SW	Input to Governing Body Meetings or to the Governors?
R	
SW	Teaching and Learning Feedback?
R	
SW	Planning the layout of the classrooms – the way the classroom is set-up?
R	
SW	Making financial decisions?
R	
SW	School meal input?
R	
SW	Anything else you can think of?
R	
SW	Thank you.

**Key:**

**SW: Interviewer**

**R: Respondent**

## **Semi-structured Interview Questions for Staff**

**Date: Summer 2009**

General introduction: As you know, I've been tracking the progress of pupil voice in our school over the last 18 months. I've interviewed you before but I'd like to interview you again to see what you think now that pupils have some input into school life. Is this all right?

SW	If you were to rate yourself on a scale of 1 to 6 where 1 was you don't think pupils should have any say at all, to 6 where you think pupils should have a great deal of say as to what goes on in school, where do you think you would place yourself at this point in time, from 1 to 6?
R	
SW	What do you think the advantages of involving pupils in decisions about school could be?
R	
SW	Do you think there might be any disadvantages to doing that?
R	
SW	Can you think of any examples of this off the top of your head?
R	
SW	So are there any areas where you think pupils shouldn't be consulted? Any areas you can think of when pupils shouldn't be involved....For example, like staff appointments. What do you think about that?
R	
SW	What do you now think about pupils giving feedback to their teachers on their teaching and learning?
R	
SW	Have you got any examples of any ways you've used to get feedback in class?
R	
SW	Thinking about how we involve children in the school nowadays, which of the following aspects are you comfortable with and think are good ways to involve pupils within school, like the School Council?
R	
SW	Anti-bullying Committee?
R	
SW	Curriculum decisions?
R	
SW	Planning the outdoor environment?
R	
SW	Input to Governing Body Meetings or to the Governors?
R	
SW	Teaching and Learning Feedback?
R	
SW	Planning the layout of the classrooms – the way the classroom is set-up?
R	
SW	Making financial decisions?
R	
SW	School meal input?
R	
SW	Anything else you can think of?
R	
SW	Thank you.

**Key:**

**SW: Interviewer**

**R: Respondent**

## Semi-structured Interview Questions for Teachers

**Date: Summer 2010**

General introduction: As you know, I've been tracking the progress of pupil voice in our school over the last 3 years. I've interviewed you before but I'd like to interview you one last time to see what you think now that pupils have an input into so many aspects of school, including the curriculum and teaching and learning. Is that all right?

SW	Thinking about the input pupils have into aspects of our school, how much would you say this has increased over the last 3 years?
	<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; padding: 0 10px;"> <span>1</span> <span>2</span> <span>3</span> <span>4</span> <span>5</span> <span>6</span> </div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; padding: 0 10px;"> <span>No change at all</span> <span></span> <span></span> <span></span> <span></span> <span>A great deal of change</span> </div>
R	
SW	Which changes for you have had the biggest impact in your class?
R	
SW	Generally around school – would you say the same for school?
R	
SW	Why do you think it's had such a big impact?
R	
SW	So can you give me just one example of that?
R	
SW	(Appropriate response to this)
R	
SW	What changes for you have had the least impact for you and your class?
R	
SW	What's the best change that pupil voice has brought about?
R	
SW	Are there any changes that you would have preferred hadn't happened because of pupil voice?
R	
SW	In your opinion, do you think the development of pupil voice has had an impact on your own teaching and learning in school – positively or negatively? So if we look at the six point scale...
	<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; padding: 0 10px;"> <span>1</span> <span>2</span> <span>3</span> <span>4</span> <span>5</span> <span>6</span> </div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; padding: 0 10px;"> <span>It has had a negative impact</span> <span></span> <span>No impact at all</span> <span></span> <span></span> <span>It has had a positive impact</span> </div>
R	
SW	In your opinion, do you think the development of pupil voice has had an impact on the curriculum – either positively or negatively?
	<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; padding: 0 10px;"> <span>1</span> <span>2</span> <span>3</span> <span>4</span> <span>5</span> <span>6</span> </div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; padding: 0 10px;"> <span>It has had a negative impact</span> <span></span> <span>No impact at all</span> <span></span> <span></span> <span>It has had a positive impact</span> </div>
R	
SW	If you were to put a number on it, what would you put?
R	
SW	Thank you very much.

**Key:**

**SW: Interviewer**

**T: Teacher**

## **Semi-structured Interview Questions for Non-teachers**

**Date: Summer 2010**

General introduction: As you know, I've been tracking the progress of pupil voice in our school over the last 3 years. I've interviewed you before but I'd like to interview you one last time to see what you think now that pupils have an input into so many aspects of school, including the curriculum and teaching and learning. Is that all right?

SW	Thinking about the input pupils have into aspects of our school, how much would you say this has increased over the last 3 years?
NT	
SW	Why do you think this?
NT	
SW	What changes do you think have had the biggest impact do you think?
NT	
SW	And why do you think this?
NT	
SW	What changes do you think have had the least impact – I mean do you think there is anything we do now that hasn't had an impact?
NT	
SW	What's the best change that pupil voice has brought about?
NT	
SW	Are there any changes that we've done that you would have preferred hadn't happened?
NT	
SW	In your opinion, do you think the development of pupil voice has had an impact on your own role within school – either positively or negatively?
NT	
SW	In your opinion, do you think the development of pupil voice has had an impact on the curriculum – either your own positively or negatively?
NT	
SW	Thank you very much.

**Key:**

**SW: Interviewer**

**NT: Non-teacher Response**

## **Appendix 3**



## Recorded Interview: T1 (2007)

(General introduction as for 2007 interviews)

SW	If you were to rate yourself on a scale of 1 to 6 where 1 was you don't think pupils should have any say at all to 6 where you think pupils should have a great deal of say as to what goes on in school, where do you think you would place yourself at this point in time, 1 to 6?
T1	I think..I would probably say 4, because I think they do deserve to have a say, but I think that with the year group that I work with that's difficult to get that much response from them because obviously don't have the understanding or the ... I would say, but I think children do have the right to have a say on what goes on, but where I'm at at the minute it is quite limited. (Teacher currently teaches younger children.)
SW	What do you think the advantages of involving pupils in decisions about school could be?
T1	I think that when they know, when they're interested in the decision-making that they're more motivated and more willing to sort of carry through whatever has been decided emm.. and I think that by sort of empowering them that it just makes them more willing.
SW	What do you think the disadvantages might be?
T1	(sigh..) I suppose they might have too much say. I think you have to tread very carefully on how much and what they're allowed to make the decisions in. Emm..I think if they were given wrong decisions to make it could have a detrimental effect.
SW	Can you think of an example of that?
T1	(silence...) I know how we've talked before about staffing. And things like that example that we've talked about. And I think that obviously and there are other situations I'm sure...but I can't think of them....
SW	Have you experienced any disadvantages yourself personally?
T1	I think just the age group that I work with its difficult em.. and that's probably the disadvantage that maybe ...you know, I'm not giving them as much choice as maybe they should have, but... it's quite difficult.
SW	OK, are there any areas where you think pupils shouldn't be consulted?
T1	I think you would have to use your discretion on that.. as things came up ..I suppose look at the suitability of whatever issues they were and say right, is this appropriate for children to be involved in, I think you'd have to sort of just think to say yes they should be involved in something and no they shouldn't in that. I think it's difficult when you don't know what issues are coming up but as and when the children, as and when you meet them and the issues arise, then involve them if appropriate.
SW	Right. How do you feel about the prospect of pupils giving teachers feedback on particular lessons.
T1	I don't think that I would have any problem with that, as long as it was constructive and not sort of... a slating. As long as the pupils had been...I suppose.. told how to do it, how to give appropriate feedback.
SW	And why do you think you feel it would be OK if the pupils were trained?
T1	I just think again.. it's involving them isn't it? .. and if you're teaching how they respond and how they like to be taught then they're going to do better. So by them being able to say yes we like it when you do this and we don't like it when you do this it's giving them that.....
SW	Right.. Looking ahead 2 years. Which of the following aspects do you think pupils will be involved in within our school? And I'll run through a few...Like the School Council?
T1	Yes
SW	Anti-bullying Committee
T1	Yes
SW	Curriculum decisions
T1	(pause) within reason
SW	Planning the outdoor environment.
T1	Yes
SW	Input to Governing Body Meetings or to the Governors?
T1	Yes
SW	Teaching and Learning Feedback
T1	Yes
SW	Planning the layout of the classrooms – the way the classroom is set-up.
T1	Within reason
SW	Making financial decisions?

T1	Within reason
SW	So when you say 'within reason' , for example, planning the layout of classes – what do you mean?
T1	I think the teacher has to have the (pause) ultimate responsibility in terms of managing what goes on where in the classroom. But, I think children have the right to have an input.
SW	Can you think of any other areas where pupils might be involved?
T1	I think things like the rewards and consequences thing that has been put together, things like that is really good for them because then, they're part of it and establishing the routines and things. I think the school dinner things that they're all doing at the minute – emm, off the top of my head I can't think of any others.
SW	Fine – that's great, thank you!

## Recorded Interview: T1 (2009)

(General introduction as for 2009 interviews)

SW	If you were to rate yourself on a scale of 1 to 6 where 1 was you don't think pupils should have any say at all to 6 where you think pupils should have a great deal of say as to what goes on in school, where do you think you would place yourself at this point in time, 1 to 6?
T1	I would say... I would say 6 because I do think they should have a say as long as its within the boundaries of what we can achieve within school. And I think we should encourage more children to have a say because that certainly came up in the pupil questionnaire when my class said that emm, years 5 and 6 they do all of the different kind of things and apart from 2 of them being on the School Council they didn't really have a lot of impact they didn't feel. Which is a fair point I think because although there's a lot going on it's usually Years 5 and 6 and I think they're picking up on that.
SW	What do you think the advantages of involving pupils in decisions about school could be?
T1	They feel more involved and therefore more of a team effort leading to better sort of motivation and behaviour.
SW	Do you think there might be any disadvantages to doing that?
T1	Emm... as long as they realise, as long as the pupils realise that whatever they say doesn't automatically follow I don't think they can be.
SW	So who do you think should be responsible for letting pupils know where the, where the boundaries lie, for explaining o children that they can't automatically have what they want and that there are boundaries.
T1	I think if that's a staff thing, but I think the children will be able to come up with their own ideas about that if you were to drop little hints about would it be practical, would that work.. If you planted the seed I think the children would.. or certainly the older ones would be able to work that out for themselves.
SW	So.. are there any areas where you think pupils shouldn't be consulted? For example, like staff appointments?
T1	I think if it's internal then no. (pause) I think some of them are sensible enough to do it sensitively and thoughtfully. I don't think there is. The more the children are involved the more they think they are part of our school.
SW	That's fine. Looking ahead 2 what do you think, which of the following aspects do you think pupils will be involved with in school, like the School Council.
T1	Yeah.
SW	Anti-bullying Committee
T1	Yeah
SW	Curriculum decisions
T1	Yeah
SW	Planning the outdoor environment.
T1	Yes
SW	Input to Governing Body Meetings or to the Governors?
T1	Definitely
SW	Teaching and Learning Feedback
T1	Yeas
SW	Planning the layout of the classrooms?
T1	Yes
SW	Planning financial decisions?
T1	Well, I think that's difficult isn't though because that's all within constraints but if it was something that they'd raised the money themselves then they could have an input into what it was spent on. But for the school budget itself – things would be more difficult then.
SW	Turning back to the input into the Governing Body, how do you think they could give an input into there? By person, by report.....
T1	Both – I think it would be nice for them to maybe have an arrangement where the School Council or a group of pupils have afternoon tea or something with the Governors just to talk about the school and think about things that.. because I think.. all the governors apart from Parent Governors, they only ever hear your view or our view and they never hear anything from the pupils so I think it would be nice to do things like that.

SW	Good idea. Anything else you can think of?
T1	No, no I don't; think so. But I just think as much as we can we should involve pupils as long as whatever children we choose can understand the boundaries. The younger ones will probably find it harder because they'll probably come up with some ideas and not be able to see some of the constraints but certainly the older ones. I mean that one about the curriculum decisions – I was astounded at how good my Year 3s were at doing that Charlie and the Chocolate Factory planning – they came up with things that I would never have even thought of to put in and it was all relevant.
SW	Emm.. going back to the Teaching and Learning one, What ways do you get feedback about teaching and learning.
T1	I do sort of thumbs up and.... have you liked it, have you learned from it. Ours is very verbal.
SW	That's Year 3
T1	Yeah. Although we have done the peer marking and stuff which has been written (pause).
SW	Great, that's fine thank you very much.

## Recorded Interview: T1 (2010)

(General introduction as for 2010 interviews)

SW	Thinking about the input pupils have into aspects of our school, how much would you say this has increased over the last 3 years?												
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1	2	3	4	5	6								
No change at all					A great deal of change								
T1	I'd say 5.												
SW	And do you have a reason for that?												
T1	Yes, em yes, it seems to be the older children and I know it's much more difficult to get the younger children involved in things but I think there's a lot more opportunities for the older children to have their say and their input than the younger children and I think that's somewhere we need to focus next.												
SW	Brilliant.. So, which changes for you have had the biggest impact for your class?												
T1	Probably just the School Council and I think one of the things is we have the permanent and the temporary member. If there was more for other children to do I don't think that would be a problem but even doing the questionnaires with them this week a few of them have said that it's not fair that I haven't had the chance to go on the School Council yet. And I think maybe what we need to do is make some sort of register so that those that want to do it get an opportunity over time and not just the ones who get the most.. so then it tends to be the most popular child who gets first... but certainly the School Council have enjoyed their experience feeding back and questioning other children.												
SW	And thinking about other ways pupils have had an impact – em input into teaching and learning or anything else like that – have any of these things on you class? You know the way you do curriculum activities or anything?												
T1	I think the creative curriculum and the way we introduce the topics – they have a say in what they want to learn about then also the marking – I think they're really enjoying all of that kind of input into the day to day running of the classroom.												
SW	That's good. And what do you think has had the biggest impact on the whole school?												
T1	Em. (pause) in terms of teaching and learning.. I think I would say the whole creative curriculum. I think the whole school seems very enthusiastic. I think it was quite hard to get everybody on board to start with but I think certainly most classes now are having at least some input into what they are doing.												
SW	Yep. That's fine. Why do you think that's the case?												
T1	Basically because staff have been willing to make that change and sort of address their own teaching. Em. But I think it's the way we have done it – we've got children more motivated and excited about what their learning and having those ideas. And it's training them from the very beginning that they can input into what they want.												
SW	Great. So what changes for you have had the least impact for your class?												
T1	(pause) I don't think anything has had what you would sort of term less impact but I think it's limited due to the age of the children. Some topics that you might teach children are able to contribute more towards than others because they haven't got that background knowledge em and some of the ..going back to what I said before, some of the groups – the SNAG group and Pupils as Researchers and things that aren't always appropriate for younger ones, so I don't think it's that they've got less impact I just think that it's not always appropriate which is why I think the way forward is to find some things that are more appropriate for younger children.												
SW	So what about least impact for the school. Can you think of anything that we've done as a school but I don't think it's had much impact?												
T1	No I don't think so because I think everything that we've tried it's widened the opportunity for a lots of our children to have an input whereas previously we might have had School Council but only a certain number of children had an input where as now we've got the SNAG, PARs and it's making sure that all these experiences are on offer to different children.												
SW	Ok. What's the best change that pupil voice has brought about?												
T1	I think seeing the children actually develop personal skills in terms of being able to convey their opinions, their ideas – so they're going around gathering information – it's almost the hidden curriculum - they're getting out of it skills that they wouldn't have necessary had the opportunity.												
SW	And why – why do you think that is?												

T1	It's something for them to do that they wouldn't have had.												
SW	Are there any changes that you would have preferred hadn't happened?												
T1	No.												
SW	<p>OK. So, in your opinion, do you think the development of pupil voice has had an impact on your own teaching and learning in school – positively or negatively? So if we look at the six point scale...</p> <table><tr><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>4</td><td>5</td><td>6</td></tr><tr><td>It has had a negative impact</td><td></td><td>No impact at all</td><td></td><td></td><td>It has had a positive impact</td></tr></table>	1	2	3	4	5	6	It has had a negative impact		No impact at all			It has had a positive impact
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It has had a negative impact		No impact at all			It has had a positive impact								
T1	I would say 5 – I think it has had an impact It's sometimes easier to do with older children and I think that at this point in time it's slightly more difficult but it certainly has because it means you're working on more of a level with the children and getting more involved in what they are doing.												
SW	<p>So, in your opinion, do you think the development of pupil voice has had an impact on the curriculum – either positively or negatively?</p> <table><tr><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>4</td><td>5</td><td>6</td></tr><tr><td>It has had a negative impact</td><td></td><td>No impact at all</td><td></td><td></td><td>It has had a positive impact</td></tr></table>	1	2	3	4	5	6	It has had a negative impact		No impact at all			It has had a positive impact
1	2	3	4	5	6								
It has had a negative impact		No impact at all			It has had a positive impact								
T1	I think 6 because it's giving them, it's almost giving them a responsibility for what they're doing and teaching them the skills that they might not have had.												
SW	That's great – well thank you very much.												

## Recorded Interview: T2 (2007)

(General introduction as for 2007 interviews)

SW	If you were to rate yourself on a scale of 1 to 6 where 1 was you don't think pupils should have any say at all to 6 where you think pupils should have a great deal of say as to what goes on in school, where do you think you would place yourself at this point in time, 1 to 6?
T2	About 4?
SW	About 4? That's fine. Why, why do you think that?
T2	Because I think children should be involved – they should have a say. They might be want to come to school more, and be more interested in what is going on in school if they had a say. And probably their learning could improve. It depends obviously what it is to do with. But if they've been involved they're more likely to.... want to do it.
SW	What do you think the main advantages of involving pupils in decisions about school could be?
T2	Improved relationships, adult-child relationships, emm improved self-esteem with children. They'd probably talk about school more at home and so parents might come more involved
SW	Do you think there might be any disadvantages to children having more say in what goes on in school?
T2	It depends – it could depend on which children they are and how it's done. So it's fair and everyone's involved, but.. then.. it's the mix of the groups involved and the mix of children. Some children could influence the group they're with ..there's all that sort of thing to consider as well.
SW	Have you ever, maybe when you've been working with the school council, or working in class, come across any disadvantages?
T2	Well it stimulates conversation and discussion between children but it can get.. where they're arguing about it, it could cause arguments away from the classroom. Not so much for the younger ones, but it could with the older ones. I don't know...It's just children really, but it could cause arguments.
SW	So are there any areas where you think pupils shouldn't be consulted? Any areas you can think of when pupils shouldn't be involved in decision making.
T2	Staffing (said very definitely). (pause)
SW	And why do you say that?
T2	Because of personalities and opinions. Children might not like certain people and it might come out later.. It could just be awkward. I can't think of anything else..
SW	That's fine. What would you feel about the prospect of pupils giving feedback to you on a lesson, commenting on teaching and learning? How would you feel about the pupils being asked to give some sort of feedback to say how it's been for them. What do you think of that?
T2	I'd be fine about that. It's good.
SW	Right. Emm.. why do you feel comfortable about that?
T2	Because I'd want to know, myself about how I'm doing from the child's point of view and if they could think of some way as to how it could be improved then, ..I know it sounds strange but in a 5 year-olds eyes the way they're looking at it. It could be something simple .. it would just be quite interesting to know. I do actually ask them sometimes.
SW	Good. Looking ahead 2 years. What do you think, which of the following aspects do you think pupils will be involved with in our school, like the School Council.
T2	Uh Huh (nodding)
SW	Anti-bullying Committee
T2	Mmm (nodding)
SW	Curriculum decisions
T2	Right..
SW	Do you think that is something they might be involved in?
T2	Emm.. well I suppose yes, you might involve them in the way we do the topics for instance and maybe talk about how were approaching the topics...
SW	Planning the outdoor environment.
T2	Yes – well they've been involved in that before – I definitely see that.
SW	Input to Governing Body Meetings or to the Governors?
T2	Mmm.. well maybe we could involve the governors talking to children more – or children giving ideas to governors talking about different subjects.

SW	Teaching and Learning Feedback
T2	Yeah.
SW	Planning the layout of the classes?
T2	Yes – yes definitely.
SW	And making financial decisions?
T2	Ahh...well... I suppose if there was a certain money allocated – if they had an idea of how much money that is and they were given choices of how to spend it.. nothing too complicated.
SW	Yes, fine. What about school dinners?
T2	Well yes, they definitely could talk about what they like and don't like about school dinners. I'm sure they could be involved in that...
SW	Is there anything else you can think of that they might..?
T2	Well.. at the moment there is the issue of parking and safety issue around the school. How we can improve life in school in general by people being more involved. Sometimes the Year 6 monitors can help. I can't think of anything else...
SW	That's fine, thank you.



## Recorded Interview: T2 (2009)

(General introduction as for 2009 interviews)

SW	If you were to rate yourself on a scale of 1 to 6 where 1 was you don't think pupils should have any say at all to 6 where you think pupils should have a great deal of say as to what goes on in school, where do you think you would place yourself at this point in time, 1 to 6?
T2	4
SW	4 – Why do you think 4?
T2	I just think that children should have a say and it's important for the school to be, for us all to work together and to feel part of it. And part of making decisions but I think that when it comes down to it there's only so much they can do and it comes down to adults in the end.
SW	What do you think the advantages of involving pupils in decisions about school could be?
T2	The pupils, what they feel about themselves. If they're more involved they'll probably enjoy school more and enjoy what they're doing more if they're part of it.
SW	Do you think there's any disadvantages?
T2	The disadvantages could be that some of the decisions that they put across if they're not followed through then they could feel they've worked for nothing. You'd need to be careful how it's down so they don't feel let down.
SW	Do you think there any areas where you think pupils shouldn't be consulted? For example, staff appointments. What do you think about that?
T2	No I don't think they should be consulted in staff appointments.
SW	Have you got any particular reason?
T2	Because they.. because they're children and there could be all sorts of reasons why they like a certain person – it might just be their hairstyle (laughter) so no, no I don't think so. I mean it could be fashion or clothes, I like the way she looks she looks cool..
SW	So what do you think about the prospect of pupils giving feedback to their teachers on their teaching and learning?
T2	So pupils giving feedback to teachers about their teaching?
SW	Yes.
T2	I think that's great – that's good.
SW	Have you got any examples of anything you've done in class... likes thumbs up, thumbs down.....
T2	We do, we do the normal thinks like that – thumbs up – who's enjoyed it, who hasn't, how would you like it to be different next time, what else could we cover. Yeah, it is good to do that. And there's the questionnaire as well to find out other things..
SW	Thinking about how we involve children in the school nowadays, which of the following are you comfortable with and think are good that we involve children with within school, like the School Council?
T2	Very good, the children love that. But I think more children in each class want to be involved and we need to look at that too.
SW	Anti-bullying Committee
T2	Very good, yeah.
SW	Curriculum decisions – is there any way you've involved children in your class or that you're aware that other classes are involving their children in content of curriculum or anything? Or is that something that you might consider?
T2	It will happen more this year with creative curriculum. There will be areas where I've said, 'what would you like to do' but no – not as much as I would have liked.
SW	Planning the outdoor environment within school?
T2	Definitely because they're going to use it.
SW	Input to Governing Body Meetings or to the Governors?
T2	Not sure about that one, emm... Depends on what the content is that your covering.
SW	So, say, maybe giving a report about something that they've been involved in. Maybe the 'Young Enterprise' group?
T2	Yes, that's good. Some of the Governors aren't always in school and don't know so that's good, yes.
SW	So, would you see children doing that in person, or small delegation or doing a report?
T2	A report – they may find it a bit daunting in person but on the other hand some of the more confident ones would love it so it depends.
SW	Emm... Teaching and Learning Feedback – we've talked about that a little bit. Planning the layout of the classrooms – the way the classroom is set-up.

T2	You could, you could but it depends on the outcome of what they want whether it's feasible.
SW	How would you deal with that, if you suggest that children set up the class and you weren't happy about it or there were practical reasons why it wouldn't work..?
T2	Well, I'd maybe try it and try their ideas and then have a vote on how they think it's gone and maybe they could come up with ideas on strengths and weaknesses for the changes they've made.
SW	Making financial decisions?
T2	Eh, depends again on what sort of thing you'd be looking at. If it's a choice of whether they spend money on this or this well that's fine, but you could imagine what they would want money spent on – depends on how much money we've got ...
SW	School meal input?
T2	Yes, good and then we could get into saying that might be nice but it's not healthy – it's about choices.
SW	So what you seem to be saying is that it's about dialogue where you involve children in talking through with them.. certain areas.
T2	Yes, yes.
SW	Any other issues that children could be involved in.
T2	No, I can't think of anything... They could maybe be involved in performances we do and things – maybe ideas for costumes and things, maybe getting parents more involved in that side of things. But apart from that, no.
SW	That's fine – it's OK

## Recorded Interview: T2 (2010)

(General introduction as for 2010 interviews)

SW	Thinking about the input pupils have into aspects of our school, how much would you say this has increased over the last 3 years?
	<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; padding: 0 10px;"> <span>1 No change at all</span> <span>2</span> <span>3</span> <span>4</span> <span>5</span> <span>6 A great deal of change</span> </div>
T2	About 60%
SW	So – about a 4?
T2	Yes – about 4 or a 5.
SW	That's great. So, which changes for you have had the biggest impact in your class?
T2	If this is my class I'd say I was asking my children this morning and they were saying something as small as not having the balls on the roof anymore – the children are happier now because they have balls to play with. But also being able to be more involved with things through the PARs and the Rights Respecting issues and the children feel more important – the children that are involved feel more important.
SW	Great and what about the changes that have an impact in school?
T2	Well I think in general the whole school can see what is going on and see these groups of children going out of classes so they are more aware that there is more chance of them getting involved in things.
SW	OK and why do you think it's had such a big impact?
T2	Well, they're getting to go round and do questionnaires and give questionnaire sheets to the different classes and do these things themselves. Confidence – they're gaining more confidence. They're actually feeling like they're getting something from it – like the school dinners – they're having an input in what they can have – they've asked them to go back and have a look at what they can have to eat..
SW	What changes for you have had the least impact for you and your class?
T2	Where you've asked about my class – I think the least impact is the PARs because this is mainly the older children so for my class that has had probably the least impact.
SW	So for school do you think there is anything that hasn't made any sort of change at all?
T2	Em.. no not really.
SW	Ok. That's all right. So what's the best change that pupil voice has brought about?
T2	Well I think again it's having children able to come in on their own without any teacher input and do things like questionnaires, so developing their skills and they're getting involved with the younger ones – that's good.
SW	Right. Well (pause) are there any changes that you would have preferred hadn't happened because of pupil voice?
T2	No.
SW	OK, so, in your opinion, do you think the development of pupil voice has had an impact on your own teaching and learning in school – positively or negatively? So if we look at the six point scale...
	<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; padding: 0 10px;"> <span>1 It has had a negative impact</span> <span>2</span> <span>3 No impact at all</span> <span>4</span> <span>5</span> <span>6 It has had a positive impact</span> </div>
T2	Well it's definitely more positive. I think it could be more positive with more involvement – like to have more children involved so I'd say about a 4 for that.
SW	So, in your opinion, do you think the development of pupil voice has had an impact on the curriculum – either positively or negatively?
	<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; padding: 0 10px;"> <span>1 It has had a negative impact</span> <span>2</span> <span>3 No impact at all</span> <span>4</span> <span>5</span> <span>6 It has had a positive impact</span> </div>
T2	Positively because of the creative curriculum – children have also had an input with the new creative curriculum and what we're learning. So I think that's a positive because they're more interested in what they're doing. I think some develop we need to do is to look at that again more ourselves but I think it's positive, so I'd say a 4 or 5 for that.
SW	Right, well that's great, thank you.

## Recorded Interview: T3 (2007)

(General introduction as for 2007 interviews)

SW	So. if you had to rate yourself on a scale between 1 and 6 where 1 was saying that pupils shouldn't have any say in what happens in school and 6 was where pupils should have a great deal of say where do you think you would sort of place yourself on..?
T3	I think I would go with 4, yes 4.. I'd go somewhere in the middle.
SW	And why do you think that?
T3	Emm...(quite a long pause). I think they should have some say but I think if some are given too much it can cause huge problems within, within a school if you give them too much say. Emm, like they're suggesting that they interview, help interview teachers and things like that and I think that that could cause real problems if they disagreed with who was picked and things like that and so I think it can have... It's got its positive side too. But as I say, it's got ....so I'd go somewhere in the middle.
SW	So what do you think the advantages of involving pupils in school?
T3	Emm.. they're more aware about what's going on. And also by being involved in it they're more likely to appreciate what's being done and by whatever's going on they'll get involved in it because of the fact that they've been considered at the outset rather than said right, you're doing this and that's it.
SW	And what do you think the disadvantages might be?
T3	Emm.. (pause) it depends on the children. Emm.. what the children are at the time depends on which class you'd do it with because some classes you'd find it quite difficult because of the mixture of children – do you involve them all? Emm.. (long pause) The other thing is it depends on what sort of teacher you are – whether you can accept it or not. Whether you can involve the children with the decision making. Because if you want to hold on to everything, just giving them that freedom to, to put their point of view and actually take part and suggest things to do, that could really threaten you.
SW	Yeah, yeah. (pause) Have you ever experienced any disadvantages yourself?
T3	No... no.
SW	Are there any areas where you think pupils shouldn't be consulted? You've already mentioned...
T3	As I say, staffing, things like that, emm...(pause), emm – no I think that's about it. Really. Because I think they do, they're the real point of the school being here so they do have the right to, if not discuss it, be told about these things.
SW	Okay. Emm, How do you feel about the prospect of pupils giving teachers feedback on particular lessons.
T3	That's got good and bad. Emm, because if for some reason the child particularly disliked the teacher that could cause real problems... So I think, you usually know what they feel about it anyway and quite often they will say something about it. But I think it can cause problems if they do..., if they say something, like the present Year 6 class a couple of years ago, if they'd been giving feedback that could really have caused problems with one of the teachers, really demoralised her, so in that respect it could.
SW	That's fine. Emm, looking ahead 2 years. Which of the following aspects do you think pupils will be involved in within our school, School Council.
T3	a-ha
SW	Anti-bullying Committee
T3	Yes, they should.
SW	Curriculum decisions
T3	It depends on the extent – and to what areas of the curriculum it would be. Because I would say something like emm., say school visits and that, I would say they could put forward suggestions for what they would think would be good ideas I would say yes. But, general actually teaching and what they should be taught I think emm.. Well take something like geography, whatever you're going with you could lead it by them giving you a line of enquiry well in that way they could incorporate it into the curriculum.
SW	Yeah – that's good. Planning the outdoor environment.
T3	Yes I think they should.
SW	Input to the Governors?
T3	(pause) I think the older ones could, yeah – the older ones could.
SW	Teaching and Learning Feedback?

T3	(long pause) I'm not sure about that one.
SW	Planning the layout of the classrooms – you know the way the desks are arranged?
T3	I think that will.. I think that could help. Because they've got a good idea of where they would like to sit. It's got its drawbacks as well. But it would be beneficial for some topics, some subjects for actually them deciding how to use the classroom.
SW	Yes, making financial decisions?
T3	Emm .. no.
SW	Have you got any other areas where you think pupils could have some sort of input that we haven't already covered?
T3	No, I think the outside activities they can, they could develop that. And as you say, the outdoor environment. And taking, actually a class taking charge of a certain area and doing it that way.
SW	That's fine, that's great, thank you.

## Recorded Interview: T3 (2009)

(General introduction as for 2009 interviews)

SW	If you were to rate yourself on a scale of 1 to 6 where 1 was you don't think pupils should have any say at all to 6 where you think pupils should have a great deal of say as to what goes on in school, where do you think you would place yourself at this point in time, 1 to 6?
T3	About a 4.
SW	And why do you think this?
T3	Because they do need to – well it's their education and so they do need some say into it and I can understand that certain things it would be difficult for them to have a say into it. But I do think they do need more than half. Emm, I just think they do.. (pause) As you've seen them have more involvement with the Council and things like that – you can see the difference in them. I think it gives them more responsibility and more say over their own ... where they are.
SW	What do you think the advantages of involving pupils in decisions about school could be?
T3	They have more ownership of it – it's not a case of well, you've told me to do that so that's it – they've got the ownership of it and they realise they have got some say in it and to me they should value it more. They get more value from it.
SW	Do you think there might be any disadvantages to doing that?
T3	It depends on what they've been involved in. I think. (pause)
SW	So do you think there are some areas..?
T3	Some areas where you – you couldn't involve them so much. Cause I can understand them having some say in discipline policies and things like that but not a great deal in it. They could give their views of what they possibly, certain school rules and things like that but they do need – you need to stand off from it as well. And see what else needs to be done.
SW	So do you think there any areas where pupils shouldn't be consulted or involved - like staff appointments. What do you feel about their possible involvement in staff appointments?
T3	I wouldn't.. it depends on what it is really – but on the whole I wouldn't agree with it. I wouldn't agree with it because it could, if they didn't agree with the member of staff, the teacher, if they didn't like the choice that have been made and they wanted somebody else, that could cause real problems for whoever is in the classroom.
SW	This last year we have been looking at pupils giving some sort of feedback to their teachers on their teaching and learning. So that say a teacher delivers a lesson and the pupils are asked to give some sort of feedback to say how it's been for them. What have been your experiences there – are there any strategies you have used?
T3	Thumbs up, thumbs down, traffic lights, just asking them what they thought of it, what they've learned, any problems they've had too.
SW	And have you ever adapted any of your teaching or amended what you are going to be doing next in light of any feedback you've got from them? Have you found it useful?
T3	If they've all got thumbs down I'll change the lesson, the next lesson and start again!
SW	So thinking ahead to the creative curriculum there are a range of different ways in which we could involved children in school – some of which we may be already using, and some which we might be using in the future, which of these do you think pupils should be involved with in school, like the School Council?
T3	Yes.
SW	Anti-bullying Committee
T3	Yes
SW	Curriculum decisions
T3	(pause) to a certain extent yes, but there would have to be a limit on it to me. But yes I can understand if you're looking at the creative curriculum, possibly seeing what most of the class would enjoy doing, seeing if you can work from there and put in their views and what they would like to cover over the term and if you could make it...
SW	So say you had a broad topic and said, right this term we're going to being looking at this particular topic and then getting their ideas and putting these in?
T3	Yes, yes.
SW	Planning the outdoor environment?
T3	Yes – definitely yes because we do the garden at that side and a lot of it is we made it but each year they add to it and it has been developed from what the children want to do because we've talked about it – like saying they want to put the pond in.

SW	So thinking about next year when we move to the new site for the Year 2s, if you were still going to be here what would you do in terms of planning the Year 2 outdoor environment? Because as you know it is just basically a piece of grass out there at the moment. What would be your starting point for that?
T3	We'd look at different areas and talk about what we want to put in it. We'd look to what we have now and decide do we want the same sort of things. Say possibly use groups – each group decide what they would like in and then consult each other then and just work from there.
SW	That's good. What about input to Governing Body Meetings or to the Governors? And that could either be presentations from pupils or reports written by pupils – maybe explain something they've done.
T3	Yes, I think that would be fine, because say the School Council, maybe something they've taken on board and they bring a report to Governors saying what's happened.
SW	Teaching and Learning Feedback we've talked about. Planning the layout of the classrooms – the way the classroom is set-up. Or the way things within the classroom are organised?
T3	Yes they could, but you've obviously got to bear in mind the size of the class and what space you've got and what you needed to start with. But to a certain extent they could.
SW	Making financial decisions? Something as major as whole school budget or something where they've got their own budget to manage?
T3	Well, when they did the Enterprise projects and things like that, yes because it gives them an idea of the finances behind what they're doing. But school budget I wouldn't. But as I say anything like that where they're involved in or even something where there was a school fair and they had their own stall – that sort of thing – yes.
SW	School meal input? Maybe a SNAG group?
T3	Yes – I don't see anything wrong with that for the simple reason that they're eating it!
SW	Anything else you can think of with the new building? Any other way children could be involved with the plans? Or how the new building is organised?
T3	Well the outside area for them all. Also if there's any walks between the classrooms if there was any art work or something like that they could decide the likes of that within the corridors.
SW	Great. Anything else you can think of at all?
T3	No, no.
SW	Thank you – that was great.

## Recorded Interview: T3 (2010)

(General introduction as for 2010 interviews)

SW	Thinking about the input pupils have into aspects of our school, how much would you say this has increased over the last 3 years?
	<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; padding: 0 10px;"> <span>1 No change at all</span> <span>2</span> <span>3</span> <span>4</span> <span>5</span> <span>6 A great deal of change</span> </div>
T3	I would say probably 4 to 5. I'm going up to the 5 really. You see it a lot more with the School Council – well they've been there for a while but you see it with the other areas like the school meals and also the impact when they've looked at the new building and things like that. So you can see a difference in it – you can see a difference in that. I think they take notice of things more when they've been involved – they look more enthusiastic ..
SW	That's great. So, which changes for you have had the biggest impact in your class?
T3	Well I think that when I've had the older ones the Enterprise Group – I noticed that with the ones that were already running it and some have asked to help run it next year so it's in that respect in that class. But when I've had the younger ones I can't say I've noticed much but the older ones – they way they took on the class below and trained them up...
SW	So what would you say has had the biggest impact maybe about school as a whole?
T3	I think just the fact that they're all taking part and they're getting asked their opinion about things. It's the fact that their opinions are being asked. Sometimes you can't do anything about it but other times you can say you've taken on board their opinions..
SW	Great – and why do you think it's had an impact?
T3	Probably because the fact that they, the children are asking the questions, the children are planning the questionnaires and they are asking the questions and it's coming over from a child's point of view, rather than staff's point of view.
SW	Good, can you think of any changes that have had less of an impact?
T3	I don't really know. As I say going with the age I have now (younger) it's not so much of an impact down there but if you go through the school the older ones you get the impact. Because they're still really young to, to take notice emm.. I would say sometimes with the actual teaching though, you'd ask them and they'd take off and you'd run more with their opinion and at one time you'd maybe say no you were doing what you had planned, whereas now it can be oh yeah that's interesting and it usually ties in with what you are doing anyway.
SW	Ok. So what do you think is the best change that pupil voice has brought about?
T3	Just listening to the children – the fact that they are all being listened to and they <i>know</i> they're listened to. It's like when a couple of weeks ago when there was a problem with the Buddies emm with XX and them – they didn't just all blow off they come to see you and thought about it and sorted it all out that way whereas in the past we could have had an explosion!
SW	Right. Well (pause) are there any changes that you would have preferred hadn't happened because of pupil voice?
T3	No, none at all, no.
SW	So, in your opinion, do you think the development of pupil voice has had an impact on your own teaching and learning in school – positively or negatively? So if we look at the six point scale...
	<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; padding: 0 10px;"> <span>1 It has had a negative impact</span> <span>2</span> <span>3 No impact at all</span> <span>4</span> <span>5</span> <span>6 It has had a positive impact</span> </div>
T3	Yes positively, yes, like I said before I might think that's a good idea we'll do that rather than just say well we've got to do this, this and this and that's a good thing. 5
SW	So, in your opinion, do you think the development of pupil voice has had an impact on the curriculum – either positively or negatively?
	<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; padding: 0 10px;"> <span>1 It has had a negative impact</span> <span>2</span> <span>3 No impact at all</span> <span>4</span> <span>5</span> <span>6 It has had a positive impact</span> </div>
T3	Yes 6, yes it has.
SW	Well, thank you very much – thank you.



## Recorded Interview: T4 (2007)

(General introduction as for 2007 interviews)

SW	If you were to rate yourself on a scale between 1 to 6 where 1 was you don't think pupils should have any say at all to 6 where you think pupils should have a great deal of say as to what goes on in school, where do you think you would place yourself at this point in time, 1 to 6? I have a visual one here if that helps you...
T4	Yes, let's have a look, 1 is not a lot and 6 is...
SW	A great deal...
T4	Oh, I think they should have 4 or 5..
SW	Right, so you think 4 or 5? Why – why do you think that?
T4	Because I think the more they're involved in their own learning, in their own education, then I think the more they will get out of it. I think if they're detached from the learning situation, if they feel that it's being forced on them as adults do, if you're involved with your learning, you learn more, you know you become more independent and I certainly think the same of children.
SW	Yes.. so do you think there are any other advantages of involving pupils in decisions that are made about school and what goes on in school?
T4	I think we will probably find out more about children's perspective, because the only perspective as adults we have is either as parents or of our own childhood and I think things change so rapidly these days that it would give a child's perspective on what they need and what they require.
SW	Do you think there might be any disadvantages?
T4	Yes, yes I do...(laughter) I think you might get the odd child who maybe wanted to take over the school or take over the world even...(more laughter).
SW	You're not thinking of anyone in particular? (laughter)
T4	But hopefully that would be the 1% and the 99% would be the success rate!
SW	Yes.. so from any of the things that you have done in terms of the class or the school council have you seen any disadvantages, I mean have you personally experienced any disadvantages you think of off the top of your head?
T4	No, except emm when sometimes children are involved in say, when we did the outside play equipment and they first did it, they had no idea of things like the costing. Once we came up with the costings, they expected it to be done immediately, they had no idea that things took time. But other than that, no, no. They decided it one day and expected it to be up and running the next day. So other than that, other than the timescale of things, and the outside agencies that are involved with decisions with children..that's the only disadvantages I could think of.
SW	Are there any areas where you think pupils shouldn't be consulted? (pause) Are there any things we do in school where you think pupils shouldn't have a say?
T4	Emm... I suppose, I was going to say safety issues are the only things I could think of. Emm, They might want to do something but they don't see the actual safety aspect. They might think of a situation as 1 child doing it, they don't see the impact of say a whole school of 170 doing it...But other than safety issues, no.
SW	That's fine. How do you feel about the prospect of pupils giving feedback on a lesson you have done?
T4	Emm, it would probably bother me initially, because from a child's perspective they will only get their narrow view of it. But providing that was taken into conjunction with, say, my views, and say, your views of the lesson...But yes, obviously to start with I would be mmm(doubtful noises).
SW	Would you be out of your comfort zone?
T4	Of course – but if it was a balanced view..
SW	Yes – I wasn't imagining it as part of say performance management, I was thinking it in terms of you deliver a lesson and say asking pupils, 'does it work for you? What are the good points?' Or 'what did you find hard about this?'
T4	Yes, I actually do that anyway - not all the time, but I'll say, how did you think that went?' and sometimes when you think something didn't go that well, the children, three-quarters of them did. I thought you meant one to one..
SW	No, no. (pause) Looking ahead 2 years. What do you think, which of the following aspects do you think pupils will be involved with in school, like the School Council.
T4	Yes

SW	Anti-bullying Committee
T4	Yes, very much so.
SW	Curriculum decisions
T4	(pause) yes, I hesitate, but only because of the time aspect involved in doing that. I do think children should have more say – we should balance between what the Government is telling us we've got to do and the best things that children like to do. So I'd like to see that. It may be towards the end of the continuum but I'd like to see it.
SW	Planning the outdoor environment.
T4	Yes, very much so.
SW	Input to Governing Body Meetings or to the Governors?
T4	Yes, I do think..
SW	Teaching and Learning Feedback
T4	Yes, yep..
SW	Planning the layout of the classrooms – the way the classroom is set-up.
T4	Haven't thought of that one.. I mean that would be an interesting one to do with them, so.. I mean that's one I hadn't thought of..
SW	Yes – there have been some studies where classes have done that and they have tried different layouts, for what they think is the best layout..
T4	I'd love to see that one done..
SW	Yes – it's really interesting ..
T4	I'd be quite happy to take part in that one. Because children might come up with better ideas about where things should be and how things should be.
SW	Right....Making financial decisions?
T4	Ohh! (laughter) Ohh!. I mean my first reaction is to say no! No! No! mmm I suppose collectively as a school council..I mean things like outdoor play equipment. I mean I couldn't actually see them taking over your job, but
SW	Anything else you can think of?
T4	No....
SW	I tried to do a list that covered a range of things..
T4	No,, teaching and learning is there, behaviour is there.. I mean things like school clubs..
SW	What about school meals?
T4	Oh yes, yes.. and I also think something like out of school activities.. might be a nice one for the school council to be involved in.. sort of think we could say, what would you like us to provide after school.. That would be quite nice. (pause)
SW	Yes – that's great – thank you very much!

### Recorded Interview: T4 (2009)

(General introduction as for 2009 interviews)

SW	If you were to rate yourself on a scale of 1 to 6 where 1 was you don't think pupils should have any say at all to 6 where you think pupils should have a great deal of say as to what goes on in school, where do you think you would place yourself at this point in time, 1 to 6?
T4	5
SW	5 and why?
T4	I think it's important that we know what children want even if sometimes they might want outlandish things. I do think as far as their school work is concerned – they generally have an idea of what will work and why it will work and they are much more intuitive – certainly in Key Stage 2 than I thought 2 years ago so yes I think they should.
SW	What do you think the advantages of involving pupils in decisions about school?
T4	Because I think, I think children then just feel much more a part of what's going on – it isn't something that's being, I was going to say have forced on them – but you know what I mean – children don't feel part – we all feel the same if we feel part of something and we're quite happy to make mistakes or to push something forward and I think children are the same.
SW	So what do you think the disadvantages might be to doing that?
T4	I think occasionally you might get a child who thinks that because they suggest something then it should be so and why isn't it so and that tends to put a teacher on the back foot thinking well you know we can't do this and there is a good reason why.
SW	Are there any areas where you think pupils shouldn't be consulted? Any areas you can think of when pupils shouldn't be involved....like staff appointments. What do you think about this?
T4	Yes I think things like, yes like staff appointments – I really think things like overall strategic budget, certainly in primary – maybe Year 6s – only those areas.
SW	We've talked a bit this year about children giving feedback into teaching and learning and some people use thumbs up, thumbs down all the rest of it. What sort of strategies – do you use any strategies and if so which ones?
T4	Yes – I use thumbs up, thumbs down and I use traffic lights and I use smileys so depending on how I actually feel I will either say put a smiley in your book or a frowny or a straight line or I'll say a red traffic light or I'll just say right, thumbs up, thumbs down or horizontally for them.
SW	And how do you think that's going?
T4	I think, I think because I do thumbs up, thumbs down <b>and</b> in their book I think sometimes that as children are getting older then sometimes they get a bit conscientious about thumbs down they then don't want people to see so then if it's in their book then they might put if they didn't really understand it.
SW	And do you adapt your teaching in any way to take account of the feedback?
T4	Oh yes, yes. What I usually do is I look at it and think oh. And actually sometimes it's all right and they'll think they don't really understand it. Actually this year with fractions – they're fine with fractions and I did a little questionnaire on what kind of maths they wanted more work on and 98% of them said fractions when I questioned some of my good ones they said well we do them Mrs. XXX but we don't really know why we're doing them or how we're doing them so I then put some more fraction work in and then asked them about 4 weeks later and so yes...
SW	That's fine, that's fine. Looking to some of the things we do in school now and to what we might be doing in the future, which of these do you think pupils should be involved in? The School Council?
T4	Right, yes School Council obviously! (laughter as T4 organises the School Council). I've been actually – quite, had my eyes opened at how good and how measured children are of what is happening in school and what they can genuinely do about it by doing the School Council.
SW	Anti-bullying Committee?
T4	Yes, I think it would be nice to have them on the Anti-bullying Committee.
SW	Curriculum decisions?

T4	What do you mean by curriculum?
SW	Well looking ahead to next year – this is one for next year and when we're looking at the creative curriculum and the idea is that instead of you planning everything and then just delivering it you saying well, we're maybe doing a topic on space – these are some of the areas we could look at – what are your ideas – what would you like us to do? How do you feel about that?
T4	No, that's fine – I mean yes, being in Key Stage 2 it is a little bit frightening in that – well you know we're so use to planning to the nth degree – so I can't say to begin with I won't think oww I'll have less control over things – but no. I actually think it's quite nice to do.
SW	Yes – it'll be nice to see the way it evolves.
T4	Yes, yes.
SW	Planning the outdoor environment.
T4	Yes.
SW	Input to Governing Body Meetings or to the Governors?
T4	Yes - because we do School Council updates, so yes.
SW	Teaching and Learning Feedback – we've already talked about. Planning the layout of the classrooms – the way the classroom is set-up.
T4	Yes – I actually do that because I actually changed my layout in September if you remember. I left it the way Emma had it and then my class asked can we do something else and we did – that's fine.
SW	Financial decisions?
T4	Well, it depends on what financial decisions.
SW	Well – say they got a budget to buy some resources for the classroom..
T4	Oh – that would be quite nice.
SW	School meal
T4	Yes definitely – that's a concern of the School Council as I'm sure you're aware.
SW	And anything else you can think of? That we don't involve pupils in but that we might do in the future?
T4	What about things like the PTA? I mean parents are involved but it would be quite nice to get a sort of mini PTA committee.
SW	That's a good idea actually – I could see that working in some way.
T4	Well I'm just thinking of things like the Enterprise work that Xxxx has been doing. We could actually when we're having a fund-raiser have the mini PTA could say what sort of things do you think children like and would bring in parents and children.
SW	I like that one – we could use that idea next term I think. That's really good.
T4	Yes – yes.
SW	Right – thank you. What about the new building? What sort of input should children have in the new building?
T4	Mmm – well obviously I would say yes – but I'm not sure what.
SW	Well, you know these cabins we're having for keeping all the material in during the move. Well when we're finished and they're put finally in place we're going to get them decorated by an artist – the children could decide how they wanted them decorated.
T4	Yes I think that would be a good idea. What about putting, now that we're not doing the ordinary cycling proficiency – what about for the Key Stage 2 yard – having something nice painted on the Key Stage 2 yard – these various committees could decide..
SW	Yes – that's excellent – thank you.

## Recorded Interview: T4 (2010)

(General introduction as for 2010 interviews)

SW	Thinking about the input pupils have into aspects of our school, how much would you say this has increased over the last 3 years?
	<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; padding: 0 10px;"> <span>1 No change at all</span> <span>2</span> <span>3</span> <span>4</span> <span>5</span> <span>6 A great deal of change</span> </div>
T4	I would say 5 definitely – a lot of input with pupil voice these days. It still has a little way to go so that's the only reason I wouldn't give it a 6.
SW	That's great. So, which changes for you have had the biggest impact in your class?
T4	The Rights Respecting – I think children have actually internalised that – it isn't just a case that now they're saying the sentences – they've actually transferred that to their behaviour too. And they'll actually come back to that if there is any problems between them – they'll actually voice some of the Rights Respecting things these days, and they are much more aware..
SW	And generally around school – would you say the same for school or is there...
T4	Yes, I think it is, I think it's obviously going through cause it started with Reception and those children have, you know, have moved up to Year 2 – they've had 3 years of it and I think it'll work its way through even better although I think even the Year 6s are more aware of the kinds of things they should do and the implications they have.
SW	Great – and why do you think it's had such a big impact?
T4	I think because it has been child based I've actually liked things like the Unicef ideas where its programmes we've put in to the children – we've actually put it into lessons rather than just linked it with something else – it hasn't just been assemblies but it's been class lessons too.
SW	So can you give me just one example of that?
T4	Well we did in our Rights Respecting work, we did some work on em, using a different word to <i>nice</i> and having a statement <i>being nice to others</i> and the children came up with all sorts of different phrases, things like, in the Year 3s and 4s, things like <i>having empathy</i> This was one of the things they said during Ofsted
SW	Oh – really? Well done!
T4	Yes – they came up with a lot of concepts that seemed to be adult based. Because this was a reference made by the Ofsted inspector when she came in – that some of the concepts she didn't think the children would get – but she understood and saw that they had.
SW	Excellent – that's great. Emm, what changes for you have had the least impact for you and your class?
T4	Em, I can't think. (pause). I can't say. Even things like the Anti-bullying because we make a day of it,
SW	Ok. Well, what's the best change that pupil voice has brought about?
T4	Children feel more in control of their social learning and personal learning and I also think it is feeding through to their academic learning because they actually can question things to an adult or they would with another child but they can now do it with an adult and not seem, as I'm the old school, <i>cheeky</i> . You know they can say, "well why are you doing it this way?" And twenty years ago I might have said, "you just do it!" But now I'll think – Ok – and then we'll do it. A perfect example is school rules. And I'll say, "we do this, and why do we do this? Is it because (I'm) just saying we do it?" And they'll usually say - well it has a health issue or a safety issue ...so...
SW	So it's a bigger awareness?
T4	Yes,
SW	Right. Well (pause) are there any changes that you would have preferred hadn't happened because of pupil voice?
T4	Well, to begin with – the very first year we were doing Rights Respecting emm, was very nerve-racking for somebody like me. Probably for the younger ones too (meaning younger teachers) because we thought well if you give children more control well it lessons your control. But I actually think this empathy business – children are much more aware when

	they do something – it's either going to affect another child or another adult – so I actually think it's easier. It doesn't mean your control is unravelling and they won't – they won't do it.												
SW	No,,												
T4	No – it doesn't.												
SW	<p>So, in your opinion, do you think the development of pupil voice has had an impact on your own teaching and learning in school – positively or negatively? So if we look at the six point scale...</p> <table><tr><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>4</td><td>5</td><td>6</td></tr><tr><td>It has had a negative impact</td><td></td><td>No impact at all</td><td></td><td></td><td>It has had a positive impact</td></tr></table>	1	2	3	4	5	6	It has had a negative impact		No impact at all			It has had a positive impact
1	2	3	4	5	6								
It has had a negative impact		No impact at all			It has had a positive impact								
T4	I would say 6 – I would say it's had a definite change in academic as well as social learning. I mean I would always have liked to consult with children – but even planning now if I do role play or something like that I'll automatically think – oh how will that affect the child and what about those children who don't like... and I'm much more aware of that. And I'll give certain children the chance, oh do you want to.. “Oh I don't really want to do that today Mrs. Xxxxx” So the children that will and almost invariably the child that's on the outside... because it's like a little family and we don't laugh at one another because people are nervous so ...												
SW	<p>So, in your opinion, do you think the development of pupil voice has had an impact on the curriculum – either positively or negatively?</p> <table><tr><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>4</td><td>5</td><td>6</td></tr><tr><td>It has had a negative impact</td><td></td><td>No impact at all</td><td></td><td></td><td>It has had a positive impact</td></tr></table>	1	2	3	4	5	6	It has had a negative impact		No impact at all			It has had a positive impact
1	2	3	4	5	6								
It has had a negative impact		No impact at all			It has had a positive impact								
T4	Oh, I think positively. I like some of the SEAL ideas and the Anti-bullying. A lot of the stuff coming out is making lessons just more interesting.												
SW	So if you were to put a number on it, what would you put?												
T4	Oh 5 – 5 definitely.												
SW	Well, thank you very much – thank you.												

## Recorded Interview: T5 (2007)

(General introduction as for 2007 interviews)

SW	If you were to rate yourself on a scale of 1 to 6 where 1 was you don't think pupils should have any say at all to 6 where you think pupils should have a great deal of say as to what goes on in school, where do you think you would place yourself?
T5	Emm....(pause) probably 4
SW	..and why?
T5	Emm.. I think we need to listen to their ideas.. and opinions on certain aspects of school. But ultimately we are still responsible for the way they are being taught and developing skills, because we're older and need to ensure that they are having a fully balanced opinion.
SW	What do you think the advantages of involving pupils into making decisions about school?
T5	Well... ideas from a different perspective from what perhaps an adult would have. Maybe they would come up with things or ideas that we wouldn't have thought of. Things that are important to them that we might think were quite, well.. less important.
SW	What do you think the disadvantages might be?
T5	Emm ... (laughter) it might be difficult to put some of their ideas into practice, or they might suggest things that are.. you know.. well...there'd be a health and safety issue.. I think some ideas might carry a risk.. emm.... (pause)
SW	That's fine. Have you experienced any disadvantages yourself?
T5	No.
SW	OK. Are there any areas where you think pupils shouldn't be consulted?
T5	Oh.. it's difficult to say. Emm.. It's difficult because I think perhaps they could have an input into what, how things are being taught within the school, and you know scope for changing that way. But then, again with us being the adults we have to ensure that we are providing...it's, it's difficult, maybe things that affect teaching or the curriculum..
SW	That's fine, that's OK. How do you feel about the prospect of pupils giving teachers feedback on particular lessons?
T5	(pause) Not particularly comfortable, although I do ask them how they found the lesson, you know have they understood the objective with a show of thumbs up or down and that, that's fine. That's good for me. I'm not sure if it was more detailed or if it was an observation I don't think I'd be quite as comfortable with that.
SW	(pause) Why?
T5	I guess emm.. I don't know, criticism , you know... fear of being criticised and then start questioning your own ability with teaching. Although I can see the advantages too, it could help with your delivery of lessons. I don't know, I'd perhaps feel uncomfortable with that...
SW	That's fine. Last question. Looking ahead 2 years, which of the following aspects do you think pupils will be involved in within our school. We've got School Council.
T5	Yes
SW	Anti-bullying Committee
T5	Yes
SW	Curriculum decisions
T5	Emm... yes
SW	Planning the outdoor environment.
T5	Yes
SW	Input to the Governors?
T5	Yes
SW	Teaching and Learning Feedback
T5	(pause) Possibly
SW	Planning the layout of the classrooms – how the tables and things are set out?
T5	Yes, yeah
SW	Making financial decisions?
T5	Depends on what scale really, but possibly yes.
SW	Can you think of anything else that I haven't mentioned?
T5	Emm.. school dinners and the way that the choices and things like that. And obviously the parking and the travelling to school, looking at that and encouraging people to use public transport.
SW	Right, right – well thank you very much!

## Recorded Interview: T5 (2009)

(General introduction as for 2009 interviews)

SW	If you were to rate yourself on a scale of 1 to 6 where 1 was you don't think pupils should have any say at all to 6 where you think pupils should have a great deal of say as to what goes on in school, where do you think you would place yourself at this point in time, 1 to 6?
T5	Emm.. probably about a 4 – yes a 4.
SW	About a 4? Any reasons for this?
T5	Well I do think that over the last year with the Council and Pupils as Researchers.. I think it's been quite good that they've had a little bit of a say of certain aspects but still .. round about a 4.
SW	That's fine. So what do you think the advantages are?
T5	We get to see the children's viewpoint on things and what's important to them and what they think .. what areas that might need improving ..it's good to get their side of things and their point of view and their understanding.
SW	What do you think any disadvantages might be?
T5	Emm.. (pause)
SW	For example – why you think it's a 4 and not a 6?
T5	It depends on what tact they take and what area, you know and they're say and it might have a negative impact on the children, on the staff or.. emm. It's dependent on what they think of certain aspects of school..... (pause).
SW	That's OK. So can you give me any examples of when pupils might have a negative effect?
T5	Emm ... (pause)
SW	Or is it not specific areas – is it more about the way the children might feel their views are perceived?
T5	I suppose it could be that. Personally I don't mind getting feedback from children on whether they've learned something in a lesson or if they can think of ways to improve it but it could then, it could have a negative on staff where it might, it might start to question their teaching and so I think, that's the only one I can think of.
SW	So it needs to be sensitively handled?
T5	Yes, yes...
SW	So .. looking at what we've just been talking about – feedback to teaching and learning, you know, teachers delivering a lessons and asking for some sort of feedback – we've been doing a little bit of that in school – have you used any of these strategies to find out what pupils think about teaching and learning in your class?
T5	Emm.. the thumbs up in the class at the end of the lesson, comments in their maths and English books – you know I ask them to make a comment, give it a mark, how they enjoyed the lesson, what they found hard, what they need to improve on, but a lot of it's from the assessment for learning, little comments as you go through...
SW	Do you find that helpful – do you find the children behave responsibly?
T5	Yes, yes I do. They're very good you know – sometimes they may even write a comment when you haven't asked for one – they might say I found that really good or I think I need to practise that a little bit more and it's good, good for me. I'm happy that they're comfortable doing that.
SW	So do you sometimes use the comments they make to direct your teaching?
T5	Sometimes, yes – yes if they've struggled with a concept and it's been across most of the class I might just then continue with that – yep, consolidate that.
SW	Thinking about the aspects where children might be involved within the school which of these do you think are positive ways in which children can be involved within the school. Anti-bullying Committee?
T5	Yes
SW	School Council?
T5	Yes
SW	Curriculum decisions?
T5	Yes, because that's the route we're going down with the creative curriculum, so yes it would be good to get a little bit of input in to what they might want to do.
SW	So have you done any of that? Or is that in your planning for next term?
T5	Planning for next term (pause).
SW	So what might you do? How might you engage them in making decisions about the curriculum?



T5	Obviously introduce them to the topic. Maybe show them the route I was thinking of looking at and asking for their ideas of anything they might be thinking, things that they might want to do...
SW	So just to extend that a bit.. how do you think that might go during the course of the year. Do you think there'll be a difference in how they might approach that in September and then how they might approach it come May?
T5	Yes – I think they'll certainly be a bit more motivated, I think they'll be quite enthusiastic about it and I think that once they've had the opportunity to do it then come May they might start really changing aspects of the curriculum that they might want to explore that they perhaps wouldn't have thought of before. They'll have more experience and more idea on what direction they want to go in.
SW	Good. Planning the outdoor environment?
T5	Yes.
SW	Input to Governing Body Meetings or to the Governors? That can be sharing information about some of the things they have been doing.
T5	Yes, no Yes.
SW	So how do you think they might do that?
T5	Emm.. (pause) maybe a little presentation or informal meeting with the Governors. Making, I don't know, some kind of booklet of their ideas or questionnaires they have come up with.
SW	Yes. Teaching and Learning feedback we have covered. Planning the layout of the classrooms – the way the classroom is set-up?
T5	Yes, but again, I think the teaching needs a little handle on it – you know it's good for them to be with people they're comfortable working with but also we've got to make sure they're actually learning and not just distracting each other.
SW	Emm.. Making financial decisions?
T5	It would be I guess dependent on what financial decisions they were – so maybe yes. But again dependent.
SW	School meal input?
T5	Yes
SW	Anything else you can think of?
T5	Emm maybe things such as activities at lunch time – you know directing playtimes. You know we do a bit about equipment – perhaps it might be nice if they have some kind of league or something they were involved in for different year groups.
SW	Yes – that's great. Thinking about the new building, what extend if any do you think pupils should be involved in that?
T5	In the new building?
SW	Yes – with the reorganisation down the bottom.
T5	Em.. some input yes.. but I don't know what sort of input they could have on it now that it's all been planned – maybe what they want displayed in corridors – how they want the Library to be organised. Things like that.
SW	Yes – that's great, thank you.

## Recorded Interview: T5 (2010)

(General introduction as for 2010 interviews)

SW	Thinking about the input pupils have into aspects of our school, how much would you say this has increased over the last 3 years?
	<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; padding: 0 10px;"> <span>1 No change at all</span> <span>2</span> <span>3</span> <span>4</span> <span>5</span> <span>6 A great deal of change</span> </div>
T5	I've circled 4 but I'd probably say 4 and a half when I think about the last 3 years. I think certainly there has been an increase in children's voice being heard in different activities where children's opinions are being taken into consideration.
SW	Right. So, which changes for you have had the biggest impact for your class?
T5	I think the creative curriculum – certainly getting the children to have a lead in what is being taught has helped with planning and also to get them involved in the learning. Special events books – children have liked to take a bit of a lead in that and most recently I've tried to get involved in designing a display in the classroom – getting their ideas so it's not just me directing what I want on the walls.. And also the Pupils As Researchers seemed to have quite a big input – especially with the new school – questioning children...
SW	So that's leading into the school now – anything else about the school that's had an impact?
T5	The SNAG group. Recently I sat in on a SNAG meeting and the children seemed to have taken a lead in that, deciding what they want in the last week of term for their meals with the kitchen staff and, I can't remember their names but they had a good relationship going where their ideas were actually being taken on board with the changes to the menu.
SW	Great – and why do you think these things have had such a big impact?
T5	I think.. the children feel a bit more involved in what's going on. There's a lot of children who want to be Pupils As Researchers – they can see something happening with it – I think that's why it seems to be working and why it's having an impact.
SW	Good. And what changes have had the least impact for you and your class?
T5	Probably, I've put School Council down but I think that could have been because of limited meetings and the way the situation has been at school at the moment, obviously with X's absence
SW	Yeah, and for the school then? Is that pretty much the same?
T5	Yes.
SW	OK – so what's the <i>best</i> change that you think pupil voice has brought about, you know, of all the things that have happened so far?
T5	Em (pause) I can't think – well I suppose for <i>my own</i> teaching and I think that, that really has had an impact - actually me starting to think well maybe they need to have some kind of control over what is being taught and for me to kind of take on board their ideas a little bit more. I think probably it's me – the biggest change has been with me.
SW	And why do you think that is?
T5	Em because I think I have been quite constricted in what I've done and restricted and I think getting their ideas and asking their opinions kind of has led me down different avenues.
SW	Yeah – that's great. And are there any changes that you would have preferred hadn't happened as a result of pupil voice? Is there anything we've done and you think I wish we hadn't done that?
T5	No – I can't think of anything, no.
SW	That's OK. So, in your opinion, do you think the development of pupil voice has had an impact on your own teaching and learning in school – positively or negatively? So if we look at the six point scale...
	<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; padding: 0 10px;"> <span>1 It has had a negative impact</span> <span>2</span> <span>3 No impact at all</span> <span>4</span> <span>5</span> <span>6 It has had a positive impact</span> </div>
T5	I would say 4, 4 and a half towards 5 – definitely on my own teaching in a positive way
SW	And what about the development that pupil voice has had on the curriculum?
	<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; padding: 0 10px;"> <span>1 It has had a negative impact</span> <span>2</span> <span>3 No impact at all</span> <span>4</span> <span>5</span> <span>6 It has had a positive impact</span> </div>
T5	Probably again, 4 and a half to 5 – definitely for me, I'm not sure about the other classes but for me.
SW	That's fine, that's fine. Well, thank you very much – thank you.

## Recorded Interview: T6 (2007)

(General introduction as for 2007 interviews)

SW	If you were to place yourself on a scale of 1 to 6 where 1 was you don't think pupils should have any voice in school and 6 was where you think pupils should have a great deal of say as to what goes on in school, where do you think you would place yourself?
T6	Probably a 5, I do think the children need to be actively involved because they themselves feel that they have more of an impact and I think that would encourage them more in their learning and things.
SW	What do you think the advantages of involving pupils in decisions?
T6	I think they feel more involved and more part of the school community I think that's a good, you know, one really good way of looking at it, because you know, sometimes a pupil might say, that's not fair because of this, that and the other, but if they've had some input into it, and understood the reasoning behind it and the thought processes that have gone into it to get to that decision then, you know, say if it's for school council then they could take that back to their friends and things like that...then that's good.
SW	Do you think there might be any disadvantages?
T6	Em.. no! (pause) I don't think there would be any major things I could think of. I think you would have to look at the extent to which you kind of took it to. Not really, no.
SW	So, em, have you experienced any disadvantages yourself?
T6	No, I wouldn't say so, within the class I like to give the children as much impact as they can in what they're doing – you know if there's choices to be made then consult them and say to them look, just kind of let them know what is happening. And now and again you might get this that and the other and it's just the children being children. But if you've got that kind of problem then you just talk them through and help them realise.
SW	Are there any areas where you think pupils shouldn't be consulted?
T6	(pause) I'm trying to think. (long pause) Well, there's going to be some, but again, it's kind of the extent to which you actively involve them to how much participation they have.. but there's nothing specific I can think of...sorry!
SW	No, that's OK. How do you feel about the prospect of pupils giving teachers feedback on particular lessons?
T6	I think you can.. you can sometimes gauge from the children how they've found a lesson, but, at the same time I think it is important that you do ask them as well. I know that at the end of lessons I tend to do the thumbs up and that to some respect is getting their feedback for their understanding but you could take it further and ask them what they did enjoy or if there was anything that they thought could have been done in a different way. And I think again it depends on what you want, because you don't want the children thinking that they can start saying, you know, this that and the other, but kind of going about it in a much more positive way but then I think that would be a good idea but I think the children would need some sort of coaching or whatever rather than just doing it.
SW	That's fine. Looking ahead 2 years. What do you think, which of the following aspects do you think pupils will be involved with in school, like we've got the School Council.
T6	Yes
SW	Anti-bullying Committee
T6	Yes – yes I think the children should definitely be involved.
SW	Curriculum decisions
T6	Emm.. (pause) it depends in respects, in what way emm.. I mean, if it's going to affect them you could involve them because at the end of the day it is their... it's for them.
SW	Planning the outdoor environment.
T6	I think that would be good because it is for them really .. because you could have some ideas of what the children want but they could have totally different ideas
SW	Input to Governing Body Meetings or to the Governors?
T6	I think that's a good idea to do that because again it's the whole school community thing, it's making sure that everyone is involved in some way. It's not just a central link and then that branches off – if they talk to the Governors and they're aware of their views and if they know who the Governors are – then that would be good.
SW	Teaching and Learning Feedback
T6	Emm.. Yes – going back to what I said before you know in a positive way and giving the children a bit of an idea of what's what.

SW	Planning the layout of the classrooms or set up – the way the classroom is set-up.
T6	I think that's a good thing as well. I mean, I often say to my children if I've had a bit of a change round, what they think and what do they think we should put up here... it's their classroom at the end of the day.
SW	Emm.. making financial decisions?
T6	Emm (pause) again it depends to the extent. I mean if it's something like the outdoor play area you could actively involve them in choosing, looking at different catalogues and then decide what to buy and give them a budget so in respect to things like that, yes. But obviously it depends on what it is.
SW	Can think of anything else that they could be involved in that I haven't mentioned?
T6	Emm (pause) No!
SW	That's fine – that's OK

## Recorded Interview: T6 (2009)

(General introduction as for 2009 interviews)

SW	If you were to rate yourself on a scale of 1 to 6 where 1 was you don't think pupils should have any say at all to 6 where you think pupils should have a great deal of say as to what goes on in school, where do you think you would place yourself at this point in time, 1 to 6?
T6	I think seeing how much, how well it's worked this year, I've been edging towards the 6. Because I think it's really important that the children feel they have a say in what's happening in their school because it's for them at the end of the day and I know from my class how much the PARs and the School Council and even the Enterprise kids have got out of doing something that they've wanted to do, they've had a say in. Even like within class - in class when we've been doing topics - the kids might come up with, oh miss what about this. And you do something that they want to do. So I do - I firmly think that.
SW	What are the advantages you've found of involving children in decision making?
T6	I think it gives them more interest in what they're doing. I think for the children who have been involved in things like the PARs and what have you to see the confidence in them. And as well with the Enterprise and I've worked closely with those children to see how much they've gained from it and how much they've grown and the Year 5 girls in particular - it's really worked for them. It's really what you get out of the kids with it and how much they get out of it themselves - they're the main things.
SW	What do you think the disadvantages might be?
T6	I haven't experienced any. To be honest - there's nothing I can say because there's nothing I can think of.
SW	Are there any areas where you think pupils shouldn't be consulted? For example, we talked before about staff appointments. What do you think about that?
T6	Well I don't know, I think even in that respect it's quite nice if you've got somebody who is coming into work within the school that the kids could meet them and even - not as such interview them but meet them and have some sort of informal chat because kids - they do pick up on things. They're very good in areas like that. No there's nothing, sorry.
SW	This last year we've been looking at pupils giving some sort of feedback to teachers about teaching and learning. What have been your experiences there - are there any strategies you have used?
T6	I think it's, I think it's a good idea - it's a bit scary when you first start thinking about it - you think oh God what if they say this and say that.. But actually I think that it is good because if you kind of get used to what you're doing and if you take a step back and say to the kids well what did you think about that, how did that lesson work and especially with the older ones you can do that a lot and they're honest - they're not just saying this, that and the other and they'll say if they think that they'd like to come to the board a bit more or no that bit was really good and it gives you, and each class is different as well so you might think that that way will work but it might not work with those kids and when you speak to them they might take you on a different direction which works brilliantly and that's better for both parts really in the long run.
SW	So what strategies do you use? Like thumbs up, thumbs down..
T6	Yes - thumbs up. They do the comments in the books and things like the peer marking as well and what have you, and levelling each other's work. And it's just general - even questions at the end of the lesson - how did you find that or when, when you're working with your groups - how did they find the tasks they were doing. It's just lots of things - a lot of things are very informal as you're going round. They're the best ways I think to do it as well.
SW	Looking ahead or rather looking at where we are just now, there's a range of different things in which we could involve children - some of which we are already doing, some we might be doing - so I'm going to run through these and just have your view on what you think about children being involved, for example, School Council?
T6	Yes definitely.
SW	Anti-bullying Committee
T6	Yes - because it's about them.
SW	Curriculum decisions
T6	Yes because - it's ultimately got to come from us, we kind of know what we're doing but the ins and outs of it - there's things that we might not think about and we ask the children and they might come up with an idea that's great and it's for them.

SW	So thinking ahead to next year and the creative curriculum and if a teacher thinks they're going to do space and in the old days the teacher would plan everything whereas now you'd give them some sub-headings and at the start of the term say, right what would...
T6	Yes – what would you like to do..
SW	Or what else could we do
T6	Or would you like to find out about
SW	So what advantages can you see to doing that?
T6	The kids again it's going to be.. they feel more involved and they learn things that they're interested in and yes, you hope they'd be interested in the topic as a whole but they're got to be specific things that they've suggested and within reason that would work – you know they came up with that idea it they feel more involved and it gives them a bit more ownership of their learning as well, which is important.
SW	Planning the outdoor environment.
T6	Yes because it's for them –it's their outdoor environment.
SW	Input to Governing Body Meetings or to the Governors?
T6	I think that's important that the children know and the older ones are much more aware of some of the Governors – maybe the parent ones that attend the events or to help them and James who was doing the video so I think to make it a proper thing would be good and to show it is a whole school community. Yes we have brilliant links with the Governors and they're brilliant with the kids but to show that whole way that could be a linkage.
SW	Teaching and Learning Feedback we've done - Planning the layout of the classrooms – the way the classroom is set-up.
T6	Yes – I mean to a certain extent they'll all want to sit with their friends and what have you. And if for some lessons that works then that's fine but in some respects sometimes that wouldn't work but event things of how the tables are arranged or what's on the walls – yes – it's their learning environment so yes.
SW	What about financial decisions?
T6	I think for some things like the Enterprise group – they've made financial decisions and that worked really well and they liked that responsibility. Even if it was something like the School Council then they had a budget for the playground then something like that then yes, yes.
SW	School meal input?
T6	Yes I think that's important because they're eating it and if they feel they've got a say in what's on the menu then yes.
SW	Anything else you can think of?
T6	There's not off the top of my head – no there's nothing I can think of Sandra, no. I think they're just involved in the whole school, in general just every aspect of school life – we involve the children as much as we can which we do, you know.
SW	What about the building – the new building – do you think we could involve them in any way?
T6	Is it worth for the outdoor area with Reception – obviously the Reception kids wouldn't but the older children might have an idea of what sort of things – I don't know, maybe something like that. Event things like, like the colours on the walls – do you know what I mean – the paint scheme and what have you because I know I did that with my class last year when XX offered to paint the classroom and I actually discussed it with the kids and what colours they'd quite like and what they thought might be a nice learning environment and what have you and we came to the conclusion that a nice pale green and it does look lovely and so things like that rather than just this is it.. OK?
SW	Yes – that's great, thank you.

## Recorded Interview: T6 (2010)

(General introduction as for 2010 interviews)

SW	Thinking about the input pupils have into aspects of our school, how much would you say this has increased over the last 3 years?
	<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; padding: 0 10px;"> <span>1 No change at all</span> <span>2</span> <span>3</span> <span>4</span> <span>5</span> <span>6 A great deal of change</span> </div>
T6	I'd say a 6 – a great deal. That's been since my time here – definitely.
SW	That's good. So, which changes for you have had the biggest impact in your class?
T6	My class have really been involved in the PARs and they presented at the conference and been involved in the playground stuff. They've just been involved in so many aspects of it and it's really nice to see that because they're older and they feel they've got that bit more responsibility. The SNAG group as well. And with the curriculum as well.. you know when you start a new topic and introduce it and they say what they'd like to cover and I <i>know</i> from my class that they really appreciated that. They like the fact that they can cover the stuff they want to cover and it's good for me as well because there are some things that I might not think of covering or doing it in a certain way that they come up with and that fits in really well.
SW	That's great. And what about the school as a whole – what's had the biggest impact?
T6	The curriculum. You can see it in all the classes and you can see it with displays and what have you as well where the children have had their input with the questions or answers and the interactive displays too throughout the school to do with that as well.
SW	Excellent. Emm, what changes for you have had the least impact for you and your class?
T6	There is nothing that I would say has had.. no.
SW	Great – well, what's the best change that pupil voice has brought about?
T6	It's just the pupils being more involved and they feel that they count, that their opinions count as well and that they are valued and it's not just that they come here and do the lessons that they do, you know, they're involved in what they're learning about. They're involved in what's happening at different levels at school. So it's about them having a place here and that their feelings count.
SW	Right (pause) are there any changes that you would have preferred hadn't happened because of pupil voice?
T6	There's nothing that I can think of no – because it's all been, it's all been good and the way it's happened it's not just all been 'bang' it's happened – there's all these different things. Gradually we've built upon it so staff have really had a chance to take it on board and understand it and see the positives with it and the children have as well. It was small steps at first, but now..you know, we're doing it in so many ways it just feeds across the whole school
SW	Well that's just great. In your opinion, do you think the development of pupil voice has had an impact on your own teaching and learning in school – positively or negatively?
	<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; padding: 0 10px;"> <span>1 It has had a negative impact</span> <span>2</span> <span>3 No impact at all</span> <span>4</span> <span>5</span> <span>6 It has had a positive impact</span> </div>
T6	Yes, I would up to 5 - 6 definitely, more the 6 because, it's just, sometimes you're maybe doing the same topics each time, like say World War II – you have very fixed ideas in your head about how you'd like to go about your topic, how you want to cover it, what resources you want to use – em, when you open it up to the children they come up with things that they'd like to know about and some of the things are just a different way of approaching it or just something different to do with the topic. That's been really good as well, you know...
SW	Yeah, and in your opinion, do you think the development of pupil voice has had an impact on the curriculum – either positively or negatively?
	<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; padding: 0 10px;"> <span>1 It has had a negative impact</span> <span>2</span> <span>3 No impact at all</span> <span>4</span> <span>5</span> <span>6 It has had a positive impact</span> </div>
T6	Again I'd go towards the 6. It's pretty much as I said for the last one you know the children being involved in their own learning and what they're learning about and so they're more enthusiastic about it as well – especially when they can see it's something that they've wanted to find out about themselves. Even if you already had it in your head to cover it, for them they'd feel like – <i>oh this is something that I've suggested..</i> I think involving them in that way can only have a positive impact on the curriculum.
SW	Well, thank you very much – that's great.

## Recorded Interview: T7 (2009)

(General introduction as for 2009 interviews)

SW	Right XXX, so if you were to rate yourself on a scale of 1 to 6 where 1 was you don't think pupils should have any say at all to 6 where you think pupils should have a great deal of say as to what goes on in school, where do you think you would place yourself at this point in time, 1 to 6?
T7	Emm, I think (pause) 4 because I do think they should have a lot of say but balanced with guidance from teachers and teaching staff.
SW	What do you think the advantages of involving pupils in decisions about school could be?
T7	Emm, well I think that the big advantage would be that if the pupils are going to be involved then they're going to be happier in school, and if they're in a happier environment I'm sure that will make a much more productive learning environment as well.
SW	Do you think there might be any disadvantages to involving pupils?
T7	I don't think there are any disadvantages, I think there are barriers that you've got to get over such as, sort of, involving all the pupils that definitely won't necessarily have the same views so it's balancing out and seeing what's best for the school as a whole as well as the individual children but I don't think there are any specific disadvantages.
SW	Are there any areas where you think pupils shouldn't be consulted? Any areas you can think of when pupils shouldn't be involved....For example, staff appointments, things like that?
T7	I mean yeah – when it comes to administrative things where as a staff if we discuss that there wouldn't be any benefits to the children being involved then it would almost be a waste of time but I think it would be much more beneficial to consult them on the things that directly related to them and their learning.
SW	What do you think about the prospect of pupils giving feedback to their teachers on their teaching and learning? So that say a teacher delivers a lesson and the pupils are asked to give some sort of feedback to say how it's been for them. What do you think of that?
T7	I think that's brilliant because I think as a teacher emm, I mean your teaching might become stagnant and you always want advise and you want support and constructive criticism so it is useful to be observed by the Head or somebody outside of the school but I think the children are the ones that are actually being taught and to hear their opinions would be great even as low down as Reception – I'd love to hear what some of my kids think about the lessons. And I mean they tell you straight away sometimes and it's quite nice that they are very honest, emm but I think that's a great idea.
SW	So what ways do you think, given that you're a Reception teacher, you might you do that. Like if you were doing a lesson and you particularly wanted to know how they felt about it – how might you ask for feedback?
T7	Well I think just trying to make it as soon as possible after the lesson so that they remember. Sort of similar to how we do our review at the end of the day where we talk about what they've learned, what they've enjoyed learning and what they'd like to do the next day as a follow up but also just including in that which we probably don't do at the moment is talk about how we learned that particular topic and what they thought of that – whether it was a good way of learning. Because we do so many different types of learning it would be nice to hear their views on which type was their favourite and which one was working.
SW	That's good. Emm, what do you think, which of the following aspects do you think pupils will be involved with in school, like the School Council. Looking ahead from where we are just now. School Council?
T7	Yes
SW	Anti-bullying Committee?
T7	Yes
SW	Curriculum decisions?
T7	(pause) Can I say yes and no?
SW	Oh yeah - Of course?
T7	Yes to a certain extent with curriculum decisions even in Reception I ask them what kind of topics they'd like to do so to that extent yes.
SW	Planning the outdoor environment?
T7	Yes
SW	Input to Governing Body Meetings or to the Governors?



T7	Not particularly, no.
SW	Is that because you've got Reception or is that...
T7	I'm looking at it like that but I can look at that if Reception are involved in the school council and the school council obviously feeds back to the Governors so in a way it does.. yeah.
SW	Teaching and Learning Feedback?
T7	Yes
SW	Planning the layout of the classrooms – the way the classroom is set-up?
T7	Yes
SW	(pause) School meal input?
T7	Yes
SW	Anything else you can think of?
T7	Well, I mean I suppose in terms of extending their curriculum in terms of which visitors they'd like to have come in, which trips they'd like to go on, that kind of thing as well.
SW	Yes, that's a good idea.
T7	Yes because we get lots of visitors and I just get in as many people as we can so we can ask them if there's anybody from a certain occupation that they'd like to get in.
SW	Anything else you can think of...
T7	Well, just to say that even in the short time that I've been here I've noticed that pupils have become much more involved with school decisions and I think it's been nice to see that to be honest because they really enjoy it – you can tell. Even Reception love going to School Council meetings so I just think we're on the right track really and doing really well.
SW	Thank you very much – that's great.

## Recorded Interview: T7 (2010)

(General introduction as for 2010 interviews)

SW	Thinking about the input pupils have into aspects of our school, how much would you say this has increased over the last 3 years?
	<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; padding: 0 10px;"> <span>1</span><span>2</span><span>3</span><span>4</span><span>5</span><span>6</span> </div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; padding: 0 10px;"> <span>No change at all</span><span></span><span></span><span></span><span></span><span>A great deal of change</span> </div>
T7	I've put 4. Basically because of so many different new initiatives we have put into place and it involves all of the children as well. And I always think that there is room for development and that there is always more that could be done, but I think a lot has been done.
SW	That's great. So, which changes for you have had the biggest impact in your class?
T7	Changes, well, I've taken this to mean 2 things – there are changes that I've put into place in my class so pupils have more of an impact is Class monitors which I never had in Reception before but it means that children are taking on more responsibilities so it is preparing them for Key Stage 1 as well. And I think by the summer term they are ready for this. They really enjoy it and get a lot out of it. So yeah – you can see a lot of changes in the children maturing and becoming more responsible by the summer. So that's had the biggest impact on my class. Actually the next one is for the school.
SW	So what do you think there?
T7	Well, the biggest impact I have put for the school is the AfL challenge as well. Again I can see how much impact this has had on my class because it's given me more one-to-one time with the children so I can sit down and talk to them about their work and challenges and extending their work. Because in Reception they find it quite difficult to set their own challenges. But also I think it has had an impact on the school because the teachers have come together, we've worked together, we've shared ideas and we've bounced ideas off each other which has been really useful to see that you're each doing the same thing and you're on the right track. Teachers have given feedback on how the children are more involved in their learning so I think it has helped the children.
SW	Oh, that's brilliant. So, what changes have had the least impact for your class?
T7	Emm, I think simply because Reception haven't been involved in it that much it's things like the SNAG and Pupils As Researchers – I know that they (my pupils) are involved in the questionnaire part of it but obviously they need to be more mature to be involved in the groups and that's the only reason.
SW	Ok. And what about school?
T7	I'm not really sure about that one – I can't think of something in particular that we've put into place that hasn't had an impact on the school.
SW	That's fine. So what's the best change that pupil voice has brought about?
T7	I think – I've put the creative curriculum and I've put because the way the teachers are involving children in their learning more. And I know that it had some teething problems and it was difficult to put into place but I think now that we're up and running, the children are enjoying learning more – they have so much more of an impact on it. We go around the classrooms and what I've seen the children – they're excited to learn because it's things that they want to learn about. And it's something we've done in Reception but I've certainly upped it a lot more this year since everyone has done that. Em and you can just see how much more interested the children are when it is something that they have chosen.
SW	Right, that's good and you've explained why. Are there any changes that you'd have preferred hadn't happened?
T7	There's nothing that I would have preferred wouldn't have happened, but I just think the thing that could be developed a little bit is when the Pupils As Researchers come round and do the questionnaires with the children, emm, it's very time consuming and especially in Reception and also they still don't understand a lot of the questions so I think that's just an area of development - there could be more picture format – they could hold up flash cards to help them – just that really – it's an area that could be developed.
SW	Yeah, yeah – that's good. So, in your opinion, do you think the development of pupil voice has had an impact on your own teaching and learning in school – positively or negatively? So if we look at the six point scale...
	<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; padding: 0 10px;"> <span>1</span><span>2</span><span>3</span><span>4</span><span>5</span><span>6</span> </div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; padding: 0 10px;"> <span>It has had a negative impact</span><span></span><span>No impact at all</span><span></span><span></span><span>It has had a positive impact</span> </div>

T7	I've put a 5 for that one because I think it has improved my teaching simply because it's made me think more about how I can give more responsibilities to Reception children, even though they are so young – it's made me sort of develop ideas of how I can involve them more in their own learning – things like the class monitors that I've introduced and sort of picking up an idea that they've got on their topic and going with that more. So yeah, it's made me think more.
SW	<div>So, in your opinion, do you think the development of pupil voice has had an impact on the curriculum – either positively or negatively?</div> <div><div><div>1</div><div>2</div><div>3</div><div>4</div><div>5</div><div>6</div></div><div><div>It has had a negative impact</div><div>No impact at all</div><div>It has had a positive impact</div></div></div>
T7	Again, I've put a 5 for that one because I think it just goes hand in hand with the creative curriculum and how much more we are involving the children – emm, we've had to become more flexible to allow the children to sort of influence the topic and the areas of interest they want to follow. But I think it has had a really positive impact because just the atmosphere and the vibe that you get when you go into a class and see children learning about something that they've chosen – it's just brilliant!
SW	Well, that's great – thank you very much.

## **Appendix 4**

## Recorded Interview: NT1 (2007)

(General introduction as for 2007 interviews)

SW	If you were to rate yourself on a scale of 1 to 6 where 1 was not at all and 6 was a great deal, where do you think you would place yourself now on how much voice pupils should have within the school, so that's how much or to what extent should pupils have a say in what goes on? So remember 1 is not at all and 6 is a great deal.
NT1	I'll probably hover in the middle I'll probably be a 4 perhaps.
SW	And why do you think that?
NT1	Because I think everybody is entitled to their opinion and that children should be able to voice their opinions as well and also they should be able to accept that what they say might not be able to be taken on board. But I think that if they have their say they feel that they're part of the ethos of the school, don't they?
SW	Yeah, yeah. What do you think are the advantages of involving pupils in making decisions about school?
NT1	Em. I think because the children are here for the best part of the day, they need to be happy, they need to be content, they need to feel safe and they need to feel that they are part of our school family therefore they do need to be heard.
SW	And what do you think the disadvantages might be?
NT1	I can see that they may take it too far, they may think that everything that is going to happen or that they want to happen might happen. It could maybe go out to the parents, and my child thinks this and that could be... But I don't know, I think, I think it should be OK
SW	Have you experienced any disadvantages yourself?
NT1	Em... Not that I can think of off the top of my head. (pause) No, I don't think I have.
SW	Em.. are there any areas where you think pupils shouldn't be consulted?
NT1	About the general running of the...
SW	Yes, just in general. Any areas where you think pupil voice shouldn't be taken into consideration?
NT1	That's a difficult one because they have their voice in the school council meetings and mediators and things like that, so I think that maybe in the general well-being of the children .. how they, how they, they can't have their say in the things that can't be changed, but maybe things that could be changed, things that might make life a bit happier for them we could maybe listen to them then, extra toys for the playground or something like that or some extra-curricular things we could maybe listen to that. That's mainly what I would say.
SW	Emm, how do you feel about the prospect of pupils giving feedback to their teachers on a particular lesson?
NT1	Oh. Well that's a difficult one. I did have a little boy who used to stand up in the middle of school and tell us that that lesson was dreadfully boring or that was a nice lesson. (laughter) I think that's a bit of a sticky one actually because I think that could be taken a bit too far.. I think.. maybe that could go the other way. I'm not sure I do agree with that. Is that verbally?
SW	In any way – pupils giving feedback in any way to a lesson.
NT1	Obviously if they haven't understood something, or they need something reinforced, I think so, but I think to actually be able to say that that was awful or you know, I don't agree with that.. But they do here get the chance to say that they don't understand, so in that point of view, yeah.
SW	That's fine. Looking ahead 2 years. Which of the following aspects do you think pupils will be involved in within our school, so, School Council?
NT1	Yes, definitely
SW	Anti-bullying Committee?
NT1	Em, yes, probably
SW	Curriculum decisions?
NT1	(pause) no
SW	Planning the outdoor environment?
NT1	Yes
SW	Input to the Governors?
NT1	Em.. about, about school in general?
SW	In any way, any sort of input.
NT1	I can't see that somehow.

SW	Teaching and Learning Feedback, which we've touched on?
NT1	Only from what I said previously, I think only if they've not understood something or if they've particularly liked something. That's been one side of it – they can tell you if it's been good, they can't if it wasn't! (laughter). Can we say possibly, a possibly because I'm sitting on the fence a bit with that one!
SW	That's fine, What about planning the layout of the classrooms – the way the desks are set up and things like that.
NT1	I think that could probably be a good one actually, because there are certain times they don't like to sit in certain places or, you know, beside certain people and just more room in the classroom, general classroom management. But I still think that the last word should come from the teacher who has to manage it all anyway. But yeah, I could see some debate there maybe.
SW	Yeah, what about making financial decisions?
NT1	I actually don't think our children are old enough to make that sort of big decision yet.
SW	That's fine. Can you think of anything else or any other ways that I haven't mentioned already?
NT1	Just the ones I mentioned – the mediators, the buddies and school council. Emm.. (pause) Emm.. I think we do, No because I think the school council bring ideas back from the rest of the children. They bring what they hear in the classroom, and the buddies bring ideas to me, so I think, I think we do all right.
SW	That's great – well thank you.

## Recorded Interview: NT1 (2009)

(General introduction as for 2009 interviews)

SW	If you were to rate yourself on a scale of 1 to 6 where 1 was you don't think pupils should have any say at all to 6 where you think pupils should have a great deal of say as to what goes on in school, where do you think you would place yourself at this point in time, 1 to 6?
NT1	4
SW	And why do you think 4?
NT1	Because I think they should have a voice, they should have an opinion, but I don't think that they should think they're going to run the place whole-heartedly. I think they should know that there is a place for everybody.
SW	Good. What do you think the advantages could be of involving pupils in decision making?
NT1	I think that the biggest advantage is that they feel included and they feel part of the school family and they feel part of what's going on in school. I think there's a lot come out of things like School Council and so things like that but that's the biggest advantage that they feel part of it that they feel they're making some decisions and it's not all them being told what to do. That they're having some say. Because they feel better, they feel happier, more involved and part of the school community.
SW	Do you think there might be any disadvantages to pupil consultation?
NT1	Only that if it ever got out of hand and I don't think it ever would here, it would just be that ... I can't actually see it being a disadvantage here – it would just be if they decided that they wanted more than we could give them – they would have to know the boundaries – they couldn't have a swimming pool in the playground for example.
SW	So who do you think would be responsible for setting these boundaries? Or explaining it to the children?
NT1	Ultimately you (laughter) I'm afraid! Ultimately you, but I think we'd all have a part to play, I think we'd all do that – but ultimately you.
SW	Looking at the areas where pupils have been consulted over the last couple of years and areas where they might be consulted in the future, do you think there are any areas where they shouldn't be involved like staff appointments?
NT1	That's a hard one isn't it because I think (pause) I think personally they shouldn't be involved in staff appointments.
SW	And why is that?
NT1	I can't really give you an answer to that one. I knew you were going to ask me that. ...
SW	(after pause) If I tell you what Xxxx said you can either agree or disagree.. because I asked her the same question and she said well they might just be.. they might just like somebody because of the clothes they wear or because they look cool rather than because of how good they might be at the job....
NT1	I think it just goes back to my boundaries, I think that's one that they shouldn't really be, they shouldn't really be part of. I don't think, I don't think they're old enough to understand to, to know who would be a good person to have.. because they would just go on what they look like or what they said or I'm going to do this in your class if you'll have me sort of thing and these things so I don't think they should be consulted on things like that.
SW	Looking at the prospect of feedback on teaching and learning – some of the staff in school are already using different methods to gain responses to their teaching and learning which might be thumbs up, thumbs down at the end of a lesson or questions like did that lesson work for you or what could I have done to make it better... that sort of aspect – what do you think of that?
NT1	I think that's fine, I think that's fine and we've done that any way through the pupil questionnaires and things that's been on there. I think that's fine children need to, they should have a say in that because the pace might be too much for them – teachers going too quick and not understanding understand things. And I think yes, yes they should have a say.
SW	That's fine. Just a separate question to you as a Classroom Assistant working within different classes in school – have you seen any examples of that sort of thing going on?
NT1	Oh, absolutely, yes.
SW	And have you seen examples of it working well, not so well....
NT1	Yes, certainly, yes in Emma's class – especially at the end of – the end of most lessons they do a self-assessment in their books as to how they found the lesson – whether they found it easy, they found it hard, whether they've enjoyed it or whatever. But also, you know, just general conversation in the class - anybody need to ask, anybody need to understand – so yeas, yes I see it all the time.

SW	So they can do it at a responsible level can they?
NT1	Oh yes.
SW	Now looking at how we involve children in the school now – which of the following do you think are good for children to be involved in? School Council?
NT1	From the children's point of view?
SW	Yes – starting one at a time, I'm going to go through the list – School Council?
NT1	Yes – yes I think the School Council has been brilliant – definitely yes – I think that has been a good thing.
SW	Anti-bullying Committee
NT1	Yes – because the buddies have been involved – yes definitely.
SW	Curriculum decisions – thinking about – thinking to next term and to the creative curriculum?
NT1	Well, I've not really been involved in that, I'm not really sure what the creative curriculum is...
SW	Well what we're planning is for children to have, say the teacher is going to say what the topic is going to be – say it's space - and then instead of it going to be planned exactly what's going to be covered in that topic, starting it off, giving the children a brief outline of the things that might be covered and then asking the children what they might want to learn.
NT1	Oh yes – yes from that point of view I think that's good. I don't think you could sort of say what would you like to have covered – (laughter) what do you fancy learning today but from that point of view yes I do.
SW	Planning the outdoor environment.
NT1	Well you're PARs have been doing that haven't they? Yes, yes.
SW	Input to Governing Body Meetings or to the Governors? Maybe like the Enterprise Group who took part in that event – writing about that in some sort of way.
NT1	Yes, yes – that would be a good thing to do to let the Governors know about their achievements and what they've done and what they've worked hard to do. Yes if it was things like that. I don't think they could just say anything to the Governors. It would just have to be things – things that were monitored.
SW	Do you imagine them doing that in person or in some sort of report? Or both?
NT1	To include....
SW	To share information with the Governing Body – how might they do that?
NT1	They would have to do a report, I don't think you could invite them to the meeting I don't think you could do that, could you?
SW	Well they could do a presentation as part of the meeting... or the other alternative is for them to invite Governors to a presentation in school, so...
NT1	Yes they could do it that way – some of the Governors come anyway don't they?
SW	Yes – it could just be an extension of that. Emm teaching and learning feedback we've covered, planning the layout of the classrooms – the way the classroom is set-up.
NT1	Yes I think that's important for them, yes I think they should be involved in that as some of them prefer to sit in some places, not necessarily with someone but where they can see the board or where they can, yes I think they should be involved in that, they should be included.
SW	Making financial decisions?
NT1	That's a hard one isn't it – that was in the newspapers wasn't it about 4 year-olds having finance lessons in school and this lady at the weekend was saying that this was such a good thing so they wouldn't get into debt. (laughter) How big a financial decision? Are we talking about – you know – can we afford to buy ...
SW	Well it could be anything – it could be an either or situation – which of these would you like, or thinking about the tyre park, that was when the PARs investigated something the result of that was they wanted something major rather than just some pieces of play equipment. They looked at how much it was going to cost and realised that the money wasn't available at that time but then when the option to get it came up at that much discounted rate we went for that.
NT1	Well from that point of view – yes, ideas from the School Council bringing their ideas for what they want to improve the school playground and things like that – yes.
SW	School meal input?
NT1	Yes, I think so – yes. We could have that. I don't think they'll necessarily get everything that they wanted but I think they could, I think they could do that.
SW	Anything else you can think of? Anything we haven't covered that might be good for pupils to be involved in?
NT1	It's quite a hard one that Sandra because we involve them in so much anyway, I mean.. I can't honestly and truly on the top of my head I can't, I can't think of anything else.
SW	What about the new building, thinking about the new building? Do you think they should have any input into any aspect of that at all? (pause) we've already talked about classroom



	layout.
NT1	Yes – I was going to say it goes hand in hand with that really. Emm possibly. I mean are we talking every child – or just the older children or what?
SW	I don't know, I'm just thinking now, sitting here talking it through, we're have 2 big containers that at the end of building project we're going to use to house the play equipment in the Infant yard – one facing inwards for the wheeled vehicles for Reception and Year 1 and the other facing out the way to replace the shed and we're talking about getting an artist to decorate the outside of those – one of the decisions could be what do you want painted on?
NT1	Yes, mm yes.
SW	Which is still a building decision.
NT1	Yes, it is a building decision and that fits in with your finance and everything else.
SW	Yes what are the options and how do we go about getting this done? Or who do we employ or how do we... Or choices are – so there are aspects there they could be involved in. Thinking about another one which I still haven't talked to the architect about yet but the outdoor play area for Reception and year 1 – parts going to be tar-macked three-quarters and a quarter grass, but having been to Johnston they've got synthetic grass round quite a large area there for the year 7 enclosed space and that actually feels quite pleasant to sit on and robust and I'm thinking maybe I should be asking for that.
NT1	So is it like Astroturf?
SW	Yes – but it's much better because Astroturf can be quite abrasive and this is a bit better. But I was thinking this was something that we could ask the children what they think... real grass or that?
NT1	Yes – because these kinds of things can come through the School Council anyhow – don't they? Well as a school I think we do an awful lot to involve the children and I think we, I know they like to be involved, I know they like to do that, and obviously they're going to be happier if they have a bit of a say – won't they? That's it
SW	That's fine, that's fine. Thank you.

## Recorded Interview: NT1 (2010)

(General introduction as for 2010 interviews)

SW	Thinking about the input pupils have into aspects of our school, how much would you say this has increased over the last 3 years?
	<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; padding: 0 10px;"> <span>1</span><span>2</span><span>3</span><span>4</span><span>5</span><span>6</span> </div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; padding: 0 10px;"> <span>No change at all</span><span></span><span></span><span></span><span></span><span>A great deal of change</span> </div>
NT1	I've circled no.5. I've chosen that because I think with all the different groups we have for what is it now 3 years isn't it, they've had quite an impact on pupil voice within the school.
SW	What changes do you think have had the biggest impact do you think?
NT1	I think the 2 that have had the biggest impact are Pupils as Researchers and SNAG. I've included Mediators but I realise that we've been doing that for more than three years...
SW	But that's all right..
NT1	Well, certainly over the last 3 years, Pupils as Researchers and SNAG.
SW	And why do you think this?
NT1	As far as the PARs are concerned, they've done a great job of involving the children as a whole with their decisions within the school. Recently the new build and the decoration and the coat peg colours and that. The children like to think they've been listened to and had their opinions taken into account and asked. And they emm.. SNAG group.. I don't know an awful lot about the SNAG group but I have seen some children speaking with the kitchen staff about meals and healthy choices and the like and of course with the increase in the amount of pupils who are having school dinners they've had an impact on their choices.
SW	Yes, good. And what changes do you think have had the least impact – I mean do you think there is anything we do now that hasn't had an impact?
NT1	I've thought long and hard about this one and I was going to say that I wasn't sure and then I thought, maybe the School Council and the reason I think this is because I feel that when I've thought about it that they tend to take a bit of a back seat to the PARs because I think that now the PARs are now bringing the ideas of what the children want rather than the School Council – I may be wrong with that but that's just what I think.
SW	That's fine – so what's the best change that pupil voice has brought about?
NT1	Definitely the Pupils as Researchers. That's been a great thing I think the pupils have enjoyed doing that too. And I think they've had a big input into school issues – certainly with the new building.
SW	Yes. And are there any changes that we've done that you would have preferred hadn't happened?
NT1	Well again I did think long and hard about this one but I struggled really because I think that most changes that have been made have had more of a positive impact.
SW	In your opinion, do you think the development of pupil voice has had an impact on your own role within school – either positively or negatively?
	<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; padding: 0 10px;"> <span>1</span><span>2</span><span>3</span><span>4</span><span>5</span><span>6</span> </div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; padding: 0 10px;"> <span>It has had a Negative impact</span><span></span><span>No impact at all</span><span></span><span></span><span>It has had a positive impact</span> </div>
NT1	I've circled 4 because I haven't noticed a great difference apart from speaking with the children – what have you been doing in your group, what have you been talking about today? But from a personal point of view, yes – number 4.
SW	In your opinion, do you think the development of pupil voice has had an impact on the curriculum – either your own positively or negatively?
	<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; padding: 0 10px;"> <span>1</span><span>2</span><span>3</span><span>4</span><span>5</span><span>6</span> </div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; padding: 0 10px;"> <span>It has had a Negative impact</span><span></span><span>No impact at all</span><span></span><span></span><span>It has had a positive impact</span> </div>
NT1	I've circled no. 5 for this one because it has to a certain extent I think it's made the children feel more included in what they want to learn and more confident to express their own opinions. It's a bit of a 2-sided coin that one because I realise that some of the things they want and maybe we don't have the resources but I think all in all I'd say 5
SW	That's great – well thank you very much.

## Recorded Interview: NT2 (2007)

(General introduction as for 2007 interviews)

SW	If you were to rate yourself on a scale of 1 to 6 where 1 was you don't think pupils should have any say at all to 6 where you think pupils should have a great deal of say as to what goes on in school, where do you think you would place yourself at this point in time, 1 - 6?
NT2	I think... 1 being they not have any say at all? Probably about 4 or 5. I think maybe they should have some say but not.. the while impact – not all of them. I think.. about 4.
SW	That's fine.. and why – why do you think that?
NT2	I think it's difficult with younger children because.. they maybe don't understand the input that they're giving, they probably wouldn't... (pause)
SW	Do you think that perspective is because you work with Reception?
NT2	Well yes – working with the younger ones – Reception and probably Year 1 but I think they should still have some input, yes..
SW	What do you think the advantages of pupils having some sort of say about what goes on in school?
NT2	They'll...emm.. well, if they have some input they'll, they'll probably enjoy what goes on more. If they've got some say of what they, what they'd like to do then they probably would benefit from that.
SW	Emm.. what do you think any disadvantages might be?
NT2	(pause) Well if you ask some Year 6s what they would like to do it might not necessarily be what you want or what the school would want, but I suppose you could work round that...
SW	OK.. have you had any experiences of any disadvantages yourself?
NT2	No..
SW	That's fine. So are there any areas where you think pupils shouldn't be consulted?
NT2	I don't really know..
SW	That's fine. How do you think about the prospect of pupils giving teachers feedback about the lessons they have taught?
NT2	I think that would be good, yeah. (pause) I think, (more positively) I think that would be good.
SW	So why.. why do you think that.
NT2	Well... it would be nice for the teachers to.. if.. if they've really had a good lesson, then the children say they've enjoyed it, I think it's nice for the teachers to hear that isn't it and vice-versa I suppose as well if they haven't really enjoyed it then they can give them reasons why they haven't enjoyed it and then.. then you could maybe change it, couldn't you, to try and make it better..
SW	That's fine. And last question – say I said it was dead easy.. Looking ahead 2 years, which of the following aspects do you think pupils will be involved in within our school, like the School Council?
NT2	Yeah.
SW	Anti-bullying Committee?
NT2	Yeah.
SW	Curriculum decisions?
NT2	Yeah.
SW	Planning the outdoor environment?
NT2	Yeah.
SW	Input to Governing Body Meetings or to the Governors?
NT2	Yeah.
SW	Teaching and Learning Feedback?
NT2	Yeah.
SW	Planning the layout of the classrooms?
NT2	(pause) I don't know..
SW	You know..how to set the classroom out?
NT2	Yeah, I mean, even our little ones do that.
SW	Yes. What about making financial decisions?
NT2	I don't know about that.
SW	Can you think about any other areas where pupils might have some sort of input?
NT2	I don't know, there was a lot there.
SW	That's fine..
NT2	Sorry..
SW	That's OK. It's OK to say you can't think of any – that's absolutely fine. Thank you.

## Recorded Interview: NT2 (2009)

(General introduction as for 2009 interviews)

SW	If you were to rate yourself on a scale of 1 to 6 where 1 was you don't think pupils should have any say at all to 6 where you think pupils should have a great deal of say as to what goes on in school, where do you think you would place yourself at this point in time, 1 to 6?
NT2	4
SW	And why do you think 4?
NT2	Because I don't think pupils should have all the say like not on what the teacher delivers in the class and stuff like that. But they need to be up there and voicing their opinions.
SW	That's fine. What do you think the advantages are?
NT2	Well emm... Because they're in school and they're learning the things that we, they have an input so that its more interesting so that they feel more valued I suppose in what's being taught.
SW	What do you think the disadvantages might be?
NT2	(pause). Well, they cannot have too much say like I was saying before... I don't think they should have too much say because the teacher has to do what they think..
SW	Right, so if the pupils can have quite a lot of say but the teachers should maintain some sort of overall control, who do you think should be responsible for setting that boundary and deciding where you draw the line between what the kids have and what the adults say? Do you think that's up to any one person or do you think it's up to all the teachers and staff?
NT2	Teachers, Governors, staff...
SW	So they are just clear about what sort of ..
NT2	What boundaries, yes, yes.
SW	Do you think there are any areas where you think pupils shouldn't be consulted? For example, like staff appointments, interviews stuff like that?
NT2	Yes sometimes but I don't know who would make that decision..
SW	But say we were appointing another member of staff and we were interviewing do you think pupils should be involved in that?
NT2	Yes, yes definitely. Some teachers when they are appointed do assemblies and things don't they so they are involved in that way and so they should be it would be a good idea, yes.
SW	Teaching and learning, when we think about teachers delivering lessons to the kids and we're looking into how children might feed back to teachers to let teachers know how well it's going, or what they need to do, what they might do differently and so some teachers might do that by thumbs up, thumbs down at the end of a lesson, have you enjoyed this, what's been good for you, what's the good part, what you might do differently. What do you think - do you think that's a good thing to develop in school?
NT2	Emm (sigh) it depends though if you go too far you don't want any teachers being upset do you- you know if they were saying, no the lesson was awful. But yes, I suppose.
SW	So it would depend how it was organised, and how responsible the children were..
NT2	Well I suppose, thumbs up, thumbs down – I don't know - you wouldn't feel very good if everyone put their thumbs down..
SW	But then I suppose you could ask why it was....
NT2	Well then I suppose I think it is a good idea, yes.
SW	Yes, you'd get basic feedback that way. Well, we've done a lot of things in school over the last couple of years where we've involved pupils and we've got more and more involved in different aspects of school life. The list I'm going to read you includes some areas the children are involved in and some they might be in the future so it's just for your views as to where for a specific area like the School Council – do you think it's a good that children are involved in School Council?
NT2	Yes
SW	Anti-bullying Committee?
NT2	Yes
SW	Curriculum decisions – and for that I know you work in Reception but within the rest of the school what we're talking about in the Autumn term in the creative curriculum is say the teacher introducing a topic and then instead of the teacher having planned exactly what they're going to deliver over the next term for that topic what they'll do is present it to the children with a range of ideas – well you know we're going to be doing space and we're

	looking at this astronaut and famous person and this that and the other and ask them for their input – is there any other thing we should cover, is there any area we should cover – using the children's response to actually determine what they are going to deliver within that topic – do you think that's a good thing?
NT2	Yes I think that that's a good thing I even think that that's good for Reception.
SW	And why, why do you think that's good?
NT2	Because they're more interested if it's coming from them – teaching them something that they're interested in you'll always get a better output don't you?
SW	So how do you do that in Reception?
NT2	At the end of the day asking them, or usually it's at the end of the week saying this is the topic we're going to be doing next week, say toys – what things do you want to do, like making toys and things.....
SW	OK, so what about planning the outdoor environment?
NT2	Yes that's good.
SW	Input to Governing Body Meetings or to the Governors? For example if children have been involved in an event like the young Enterprise group last week – giving some input to the Governing Body – do you think that's good?
NT2	Yes – I don't know how Reception children would do that ...
SW	So do you think pupils could do that generally to the Governors in person or by writing a report or both – what do you think?
NT2	Well I don't think the Governors would mind it doing in person – both really I think.
SW	Planning the layout of the classrooms – the way the classroom is set-up? Do you think you could involve pupils in that?
NT2	I think you could, I think you could higher up the school – sometimes it's a bit trickier with the younger ones – yes as long as the teacher liked the layout.
SW	What about some sort of financial decisions? That could be on a very sophisticated level like determining how we could spend the school budget or it could be on the children having their own project and pocket of money so that they're working within a budget for that project..
NT2	No – I'm not sure about that one. I don't know.
SW	For example the School Council are given £100 for to buy breaktime resources..
NT2	Oh they could do – they could work together to do that, yes.
SW	So in a small way with a limited budget?
NT2	Yes
SW	School meals, school meals?
NT2	Yes
SW	What about the new building? Do you think they could have any input in any way in the new building?
NT2	Yes I suppose they could – like, I don't know – colours of things – if there was some new stuff being bought they could have some input into that..
SW	What about – can you think of anything else, any other ways in which we could involve children in school and we don't at the minute?
NT2	No – I think we involve them a lot.
SW	That's fine. Thank you.

## Recorded Interview: NT2 (2010)

(General introduction as for 2010 interviews)

SW	Thinking about the input pupils have into aspects of our school, how much would you say this has increased over the last 3 years?
	<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; padding: 0 10px;"> <span>1 No change at all</span> <span>2</span> <span>3</span> <span>4</span> <span>5</span> <span>6 A great deal of change</span> </div>
NT2	I'd say up to 5.
SW	Right – and why do you think that?
NT2	The Pupils As Researchers have got children involved in lots of things to do with the new building and things... like asking them what colour they want the coat pegs and just.. lots of different things. So it's getting them more involved so I think that's really important.
SW	What changes do you think have had the biggest impact of all the different things we've done?
NT2	Emm, Well in Reception we do a lot of, we ask them what topics interest them like to do with the curriculum and that gets them interested – we've always done that but that's just Reception class – but involving the older ones in the new building it makes them – they've got a lot more input and when they go down they'll go, well I chose... it's got more meaning to them than if we just choose everything.
SW	Yes, good and which changes do you think have had the least impact (silence) – I mean, Pupils As Researchers, SNAG group, School Council, emm input into the curriculum...Mediators whatever... if any (laughs)
NT2	I don't really know – I think they've all had an impact....
SW	That's fine, that's fine – so what's the best change that pupil voice has brought about in the last few years...if you could pick one thing that's made a difference what would it be?
NT2	I think the Pupils as Researchers coming round with their questionnaires although in Reception sometimes it's a bit long and they don't really understand what's asked of them but I think in other classes it works really well.
SW	Yes, that's fine and why do you think that's a good thing?
NT2	Well it's just because in the past few years they weren't involved in anything and they didn't have no say in, in anything and I think it's better that they have now.
SW	Yes – that's fine. And are there any changes that we've done that you would have preferred hadn't happened?
NT2	(pause) No, not really, It's just like I said when in Reception they come round with the questionnaires and they're a bit long ...
SW	Yes – so we could cut these down a bit... right.
SW	In your opinion, do you think the development of pupil voice has had an impact on your own role within school – either positively or negatively?
	<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; padding: 0 10px;"> <span>1 It has had a Negative impact</span> <span>2</span> <span>3 No impact at all</span> <span>4</span> <span>5</span> <span>6 It has had a positive impact</span> </div>
NT2	Yes, in a positive way through asking the children even in Reception what they're wanting to learn about, because they're more interested in it when they go off to learn about it. And at the end of the day when you ask them what they've been learning about and what you want to learn tomorrow they're all enthusiastic 'cause it's their ideas.
SW	Good and what mark would you say on this scale.
NT2	A 6, I'd say a 6.
SW	Good, in your opinion, do you think the development of pupil voice has had an impact on the curriculum – either your own positively or negatively?
	<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; padding: 0 10px;"> <span>1 It has had a Negative impact</span> <span>2</span> <span>3 No impact at all</span> <span>4</span> <span>5</span> <span>6 It has had a positive impact</span> </div>
NT2	Yeah positively, they always want to learn about things that they say - it has, it has had an impact.
SW	And what would you say for that?
NT2	I'd say a 6 for that too.
SW	That's great – well thank you very much.

## Recorded Interview: NT3 (2007)

(General introduction as for 2007 interviews)

SW	If you were to rate yourself on a scale of 1 to 6 where 1 was you don't think pupils should have any say at all to 6 where you think pupils should have a great deal of say as to what goes on in school, where do you think you would place yourself at this point in time, 1 to 6?
NT3	I think 6 probably, I think how on earth can we possibly make things better for the children if we don't know what they think about what we're doing, so if they don't tell us or don't have the opportunity to tell us we'll never be able to make things better.
SW	What do you think the advantages of involving pupils in decisions about school could be?
NT3	Well, you can get their perspective about what we do and why we do it and what's important to them... and I think we have, like you said before, very fixed ideas about the ways should be done and what we are being shown and told should be done with children but that might not be the best way of doing it for them and if they can tell us the ways they prefer to learn and prefer things to be done then we can adapt that and help them in that way.
SW	Do you think there might be any disadvantages to doing that?
NT3	I think sometimes that you get to the point where.... I know children need to be listened to and heard but.. when things need to be done in a certain way ..that they don't have the input in. I think if they had too much say then they might say, 'we don't want this done' and it's not a choice, so if they are consulted in everything then it would have a disadvantage in that way because some things are not appropriate for them to make decisions...
SW	Can you think of any examples of this off the top of your head?
NT3	No, I can't actually. Sorry!
SW	So are there any areas where you think pupils shouldn't be consulted? Any areas you can think of when pupils shouldn't be involved....For example, Like staff appointments. What do you think about that?
NT3	Mmm, I think the way interviews seem to go now where a lesson is seen and a lesson is taught and the children are involved in that I think it might be useful to get their feedback 'cos it is them that are going to benefit or not from the teacher or whoever you employ. Saying that I don't think it should be the final decision. But I think that maybe they should have a say in something like that. Emm, I don't know to be honest. Not being behind the scenes maybe in the kind of financial side of running things in the school. Maybe they would never have a say in something like that. But I don't know.
SW	That's fine. What do you think about the prospect of pupils giving feedback to their teachers on their teaching and learning? So that say a teacher delivers a lesson and the pupils are asked to give some sort of feedback to say how it's been for them. What do you think of that?
NT3	I think that in some sort of situations it could be beneficial, but I think there are those children who might take advantage of a situation like that, so you would maybe have to ...but then again that singles other children out. I was going to say you would maybe have to pick children you knew were reliable and sensible and would answer sensibly and accurately but then that's not every child having their voice. So sometimes I think that maybe it isn't appropriate but yet again if that teacher isn't delivering it in a way that those children find easy or need help with or don't feel that they've got what they should have out of it then maybe we should be told. But I'm not sure what the balance is.
SW	That's fine, that's fine. Looking ahead 2 years. What do you think, which of the following aspects do you think pupils will be involved with in school, like the School Council.
NT3	Yes
SW	Anti-bullying Committee
NT3	Yes
SW	Curriculum decisions
NT3	Yes, to some extent. I think yes.
SW	Planning the outdoor environment.
NT3	Yes
SW	Input to Governing Body Meetings or to the Governors?
NT3	I think possibly yes only because I think the governors have such a say as to what goes on in our school. But there isn't always a link. I have to admit that I don't feel I have a very good link with the Governors so I think to some extent maybe yes they should be aware of what goes on.
SW	Teaching and Learning Feedback

NT3	Yeah, I think so.
SW	Planning the layout of the classrooms – the way the classroom is set-up.
NT3	Yes, to have a say in but maybe also being mindful that they possibly can't always have their own way and that maybe things need to be a certain way for a certain reason. But yes
SW	Yes, I think that perhaps that's part of the learning process. Making financial decisions?
NT3	To some extent maybe yes – if it's things that directly affect them things they either have or don't have in school available to them, yes.
SW	School meal input?
NT3	Yes, to some extent.
SW	Anything else you can think of?
NT3	(these are the ones I don't like)
SW	The open-ended ones (Laughter) That's all right. There doesn't have to be anything else, I was just trying to cover all bases.
NT3	No I can't think of anything if I'm honest. Like I say, I think to some extent they could feature in most things, but in an appropriate way.
SW	That's fine – it's OK
NT3	Is that the end..
SW	Yes – thank you.



## Recorded Interview: NT3 (2009)

(General introduction as for 2009 interviews)

SW	If you were to rate yourself on a scale of 1 to 6 where 1 was you don't think pupils should have any say at all to 6 where you think pupils should have a great deal of say as to what goes on in school, where do you think you would place yourself at this point in time, 1 to 6?
NT3	I think I would place myself on a 4 or a 5 I think. It's important that we understand their point of view and aspects of their life that we can focus on, but I also agree that you know, we are kind of 'in charge' if you like. We need to take overall control – I think if they had overall say – which I don't think will ever happen, but, it may be difficult to control things.
SW	And I think you've just explained why you think that.
SW	What do you think the advantages of involving pupils in decisions about school could be?
NT3	I think it is vital to know as I said what their interests are, what their opinions about school life or outside world generally is, emm
SW	What about their own learning?
NT3	I think they can take a lot of responsibility for how they work and..especially the older children are much, em, more aware of what they find easy- you know, if they find very visual aspects of learning, their way of learning, I think they are more aware of it. And obviously we've got to help the younger ones realise how they learn to the best of their advantage. And obviously if we don't listen to what they have to say we will never find out what they find the best way to learn so I think it would be useful for them to kind of tell us how they like to learn and so we can help so they are achieving to their best.
SW	What do you think the disadvantages might be?
NT3	As I said before I think that maybe if it kind of went too far, keeping a track, keeping it on an even keel – that balance between respecting them and their opinions and how they learn but also knowing that we need control over kind of what they are learning about. And possibly if we gave them too much it might occasionally be difficult to kind of balance that between almost adult and child I suppose to some extent, teacher and student...
SW	Good. Are there any areas where you think pupils shouldn't be consulted? Any areas you can think of when pupils shouldn't be involved....For example, Like staff appointments. What do you think about that sort of thing?
NT3	Emm. I don't think I can think of any area where I don't think they should be involved. I think their opinion on say for example a new member of staff could be quite interesting and I know quite often candidates do meet a School Council kind of representative. I don't think I can think of any situation where I think they shouldn't be consulted if you like – I can't....
SW	That's fine. This last year we have been looking at pupils giving some sort of feedback to their teachers on their teaching and learning. So that say a teacher delivers a lesson and the pupils are asked to give some sort of feedback to say how it's been for them. What have been your experiences there – are there any strategies you have used? What do you think of that? Maybe in your role as HLTA have you seen any strategies used or do you use any yourself?
NT3	I think it can be quite interesting to know what the children think of how you deliver a lesson to them. From my point of view possible, emm – I can't think of the word – things that I would be insecure about delivering – it might be quite a surprise shall we say to find out what they think and not always a good thing I don't think at times, but I think it would be good to know. And then you could change how you might deliver something.
SW	So do you think that might be how it's handled? In terms of their expectation to be able to rate you as good or rubbish on a lesson or whether to say I like it when you did this because that helped me learn best?
NT3	I think I'd prefer a "I liked it best when we did this" as to a scale possibly – I don't know whether I'd want to know what.....emm (laughter)
SW	I don't know whether any of us would..(laughter)
NT3	No (laughter) I think there would be that element where possibly some would possibly take it the other way and be deliberately kind of mischievous about it. But I think from my point of view I would like to know I was doing a good job, and if I could improve I would like to know I could improve. Obviously they are the ones you are delivering it to so they are I suppose the most important person/people to tell you that but..
SW	So thinking ahead to the creative curriculum there are a range of different ways in which we could involve children in school, some of which we may be already using. Which of these do you think pupils should be involved in within school, like the School Council?
NT3	Mmm yes

SW	Anti-bullying Committee?
NT3	Yes
SW	Curriculum decisions – for example if you gave them a broad topic them coming up with the questions you might want to address?
NT3	Yes, I like that or what they know about a topic and then work on the things they maybe don't know or are not so sure about – yeah. I like that idea.
SW	Planning the outdoor environment?
NT3	Yes, definitely.
SW	Input to Governing Body Meetings or to the Governors? You know like a report about pupil activities?
NT3	Yes they should and I think maybe they in their element should be aware about what the Governing Body do so they can appreciate that side of school because they will never have had anything to do with that before – so I think if maybe they knew a bit of the background about decisions that are made then it would help them to understand.
SW	Teaching and Learning Feedback?
NT3	I suppose we answered that before yes, yes I suppose to some extent yes.
SW	Planning the layout of the classrooms – the way the classroom is set-up, furniture arranged?
NT3	Yes, especially if it has an impact on how their learning, yeah I think it would be good.
SW	Making financial decisions? That could be either the whole school budget or it could be like a budget that is given to a particular group to work with?
NT3	Emm, yeah, I think it's important that they are maybe aware of emm how the money is spent and if they have an input in that they might have a more realistic idea about the things they can and can't have.
SW	School meal input?
NT3	Mm. Yeah – I think obviously if they're eating it they should be able to say whether they are enjoying the meals but sometimes that's not necessarily controllable because of financial restrictions obviously, but definitely, yeah.
SW	Anything else you can think of?
NT3	Mmm (silence)
SW	What about the new building? What extent, if at all, do you think they should be involved in the building?
NT3	I think to some degree they can't physically be but yeah I think and I can imagine we have given it a lot of thought to make the building as accessible to them as possible but if they are going to use the space it may be down to kind of organisational, or furniture if maybe they are going to physically use but I wouldn't have thought they can have a great deal of input into actual construction of it – I don't know.
SW	Anything else you'd like to say?
NT3	No, I don't think so.
SW	That's great, thank you very much.

## Recorded Interview: NT3 (2010)

(General introduction as for 2010 interviews)

SW	Thinking about the input pupils have into aspects of our school, how much would you say this has increased over the last 3 years?
	<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; padding: 0 10px;"> <span>1 No change at all</span> <span>2</span> <span>3</span> <span>4</span> <span>5</span> <span>6 A great deal of change</span> </div>
NT3	My answer's 5.
SW	Right – and why do you think that?
NT3	I think especially with groups like SNAG and Pupils As Researchers and to some extent the School Council we seem to be much more proactive and they're getting kind of involved and other children involved and it just seems to have been much more obvious that there are groups that are doing, that are having an impact.
SW	Good, are there any groups, do you think there's a group that's had the biggest impact?
NT3	I think the Snag has with regard to pupil questionnaires and things like that and asking the children what they think but I suppose that goes for Pupils as Researchers as well. Emm. That's probably the biggest impact thing that I've noticed.
SW	And why, why do you think this?
NT3	They've had an awful lot of input into the school lunches, asking the children what they think about what they like and what they don't and obviously the PARs seem to have had a great deal of input into the refurbishment of the school. And I think, I think that's quite an exciting thing obviously for them to be part of because you want them involved. It's been nice to be able to include them in that too.
SW	Good. So what changes do you think have had the least impact?
NT3	Well, I kind of linked that to what impact because I obviously think the SNAG has had a lot to do with the school lunches but I honestly don't know if these changes have been implicated – I don't know what they do when they meet. Whether they are actually practical changes. And obviously the situation we are in at the minute we're kind of limited to what we possible can do with bringing the lunches up here so I'm kind of linking that in. So I don't know whether those actually things that happen. And I mentioned School Council but I'm not exactly sure – I don't really know what they are up to at the moment. But that again may be just my personal interest in it and I'm only here half the time.
SW	That's fine – so what's the best change that pupil voice has brought about? And we just throw in curricular changes and the impact the children have into the curriculum.
NT3	I think what had the biggest impact and what I liked the most anyway was the input into the new building as I said before because obviously it's a fabulous opportunity for them to be involved – few schools would ever get the opportunity to do that.- I think it's nice for them.
SW	Yes. And are there any changes that we've done that you would have preferred hadn't happened to do with pupil voice?
NT3	I don't think so. I think the only negative thing I might have picked up is when they've been out and about doing the questionnaires and sometimes they have been a bit lengthy and wordy and whether that's because they have had free reign and they wrote what they asked because that was what they thought or whether they genuinely couldn't be any less than that I don't know but that's the only thing that I could say seemed to have an impact and even that's not really that bad.
SW	In your opinion, do you think the development of pupil voice has had an impact on your own role within school – either positively or negatively?
	<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; padding: 0 10px;"> <span>1 It has had a Negative impact</span> <span>2</span> <span>3 No impact at all</span> <span>4</span> <span>5</span> <span>6 It has had a positive impact</span> </div>
NT3	I don't feel it had had a great impact on me but I thought that maybe in my part time role I don't how much interest I take on the outcome of these things and I think that's a personal thing to me. But I don't know how much I am actually prepared to ask people and ask about what happened with that questionnaire, what happened at that meeting – I don't do that.. so that's why I don't feel it has much impact on me – so a 4.
SW	In your opinion, do you think the development of pupil voice has had an impact on the curriculum – either your own positively or negatively?
	<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; padding: 0 10px;"> <span>1 It has had a Negative impact</span> <span>2</span> <span>3 No impact at all</span> <span>4</span> <span>5</span> <span>6 It has had a positive impact</span> </div>

NT3	Well I put a 4 for that as well and for a similar reason as I was sitting thinking I can't, I'm not exactly sure how it affects the curriculum .. and I don't whether it's something I've missed or whether it is something I've forgotten. I don't know what impact the children have had.
SW	That's all right. It's when the teacher has done her planning and instead of setting out the topic in advance deciding what the children are going to learn about the teacher raises the topic and the kids come up with the questions and areas they want to investigate so they choose what they want to learn about.
NT3	So not the actual topic...
SW	No but all the things within that topic. The children choose what they are going to learn and how they are going to learn it – so they'll make suggestions for that.. that's the sort of starting point.
NT3	Well from that point that has quite a high impact because obviously the children are much more interested and focussed because its ideas they have come up with – I think it's my personal view of things and my take on things.
SW	That's all right. That's all right. We've obviously not explained that to you very well.... it works two ways you being in part time because obviously sometimes we forget to tell you things – we think we've told you everything that is going on and we haven't!
NT3	And sometimes I breeze in and I do what I'm doing ..
SW	So would you change your last number or are you happy with what you said.. It's completely up to you – I'm not...
NT3	No, no that's fine – I'll change it to a 5.
SW	OK – that's fine – thank you very much.

## Recorded Interview: NT4 (2007)

(General introduction as for 2007 interviews)

SW	If you were to rate yourself on a scale of 1 to 6 where 1 was you don't think pupils should have any say at all to 6 where you think pupils should have a great deal of say as to what goes on in school, where do you think you would place yourself at this point in time, 1 to 6?
NT4	3 to 4..
SW	And why's that?
NT4	Because it lets you know their opinions of... what they're thinking of school, if they're happy in school or things that need to be changed.
SW	What do you think the advantages of involving pupils in making decisions about school?
NT4	It's more or less just what I've said, isn't it? About them.. giving them the opportunity to.. let us know what they would like.
SW	Ok, then what about disadvantages?
NT4	Mmm, I can't think of any....
SW	That's OK.
SW	So are there any areas where you think pupils shouldn't be consulted, and why?
NT4	I don't think they should have any say into what happens to other pupils on discipline or anything like that...
SW	Yeah – that's good. Emm what do you think about the prospect of pupils giving teachers feedback on particular lessons.
NT4	Only if they're asked to do that. Not all the time..
SW	Right, and why?
NT4	Because, it could interfere with all their lessons. They could be sat there all day listening to what the pupils have to say.
SW	Yeah. That's fine. Looking ahead 2 years. Which of the following aspects do you think pupils will be involved in with in school, like the School Council?
NT4	Yeah.
SW	Anti-bullying Committee?
NT4	Yeah.
SW	Curriculum decisions?
NT4	Em..No.
SW	Planning the outdoor environment?
NT4	Yes.
SW	Input to the Governors?
NT4	Emm.. no, I wouldn't have thought so.
SW	Teaching and Learning Feedback?
NT4	Yeah.
SW	Planning the layout of classrooms?
NT4	Em.. Yeah.
SW	And making financial decisions?
NT4	No.
SW	Is there anything else you can think of?
NT4	After school clubs – saying which clubs they would like.
SW	That's a good idea! Okay – that'll do. Thank you.

## Recorded Interview: NT4 (2009)

(General introduction as for 2009 interviews)

SW	If you were to rate yourself on a scale of 1 to 6 where 1 was you don't think pupils should have any say at all to 6 where you think pupils should have a great deal of say as to what goes on in school, where do you think you would place yourself at this point in time, 1 to 6?
NT4	3 or 4
SW	And why?
NT4	Because I don't think they should have too much say but their opinions would be nice to be taken into account.
SW	And why do you think they shouldn't have too much say?
NT4	Because at the end of the day they're still children.
SW	And what do you think the advantages of involving children in making decisions about what happens to them at school might be?
NT4	Well you could hear their views and take them into account and get their opinions.
SW	And what do you think the disadvantages might be? (pause whilst interviewee asks if we could switch tape off whilst she has a bit think). For example, what might go wrong – why is it a 3 or a 4 and not a 6?
NT4	I don't think they should have too much say – they should remember that the teaching staff are there to tell them what to do and it shouldn't be vice-versa.
SW	Do you think there are any areas where we shouldn't involve pupils in what is going on? Like I think we mentioned last time staff appointments? Do you think they should be involved in that sort of thing within school?
NT4	No I don't think they should be.
SW	And why is that?
NT4	Because I don't think they're qualified to judge.
SW	Thinking about all the things we do in school over the last few years – I'm going to read off a list, some of which we have done within school and some of which we are planning to do. Just tell me what you think, whether or not you think it's appropriate that children are involved for example, the School Council?
NT4	I don't really know what they do on the School Council. I'm not really involved in all of that so I don't have a big understanding of it.
SW	Well it's just representatives from each year group and they meet up with the teacher to discuss issues for example in class time one or two people might think that they're not very happy about this or can we have that and they might raise it at School Council meeting where a group of representatives from all classes would discuss it and sometimes they would take it back to their class to ask to make sure it's not just one or two people from their class but it's across the board as school and we could look at changing things or introducing things. So that's what they do.
NT4	Yes – that's OK.
SW	Anti-bullying Committee
NT4	I think that's a good idea.
SW	Curriculum decisions – what we're planning to do in September with the creative curriculum is the year groups are going to be.. in the past in the year groups if the teacher's going to be doing a topic they'll look at all the curriculum strands and then pull it all together for the pupils. What we're planning to do in September is for the teacher to say to the children right this term we're going to be looking at space as a topic and within that topic we might look at famous astronauts through the ages or space missions, we might look at why we go to the moon and what has changed since then. And ask pupils views about what else they might want to learn about space and teachers take that into account in their planning within a set framework – so do you think would be good?
NT4	I think that's a good idea.
SW	And why is that then?
NT4	Well you're getting their views and what they are interested in and what appeals to them.
SW	Planning the outdoor environment within school?
NT4	Yes, yes.
SW	Input to Governing Body Meetings or to the Governors? That could be something like for example the Enterprise Group that took part last week – maybe doing a little report or a little presentation to the Governors about what they've done – just informing Governors about what's going on – do you think that's good?

NT4	Oh yes, yes.
SW	Do you think that would be better if they did that by a report or by a presentation – or does it not matter might it depend on what the presentation is?
NT4	Depend on what the subject was.
SW	Teaching and learning feedback, one of the things we've done over the last couple of years is for teachers to get more of an insight into what pupils think of the lesson – so some of them will, will say at the end of a lesson did you enjoy that, thumbs up, thumbs down or did you learn a lot from that or they might say what bit of the lesson did you like best or what did you learn most from or if I was doing that again what could I do differently. Do you think it's good for teachers to get some sort of feedback in these terms?
NT4	Yes, some sort of feedback for next time, yes.
SW	Planning the layout of the classrooms – do you think children can have an input into how we set up the classrooms?
NT4	To a certain extent yes, but it depends on health and safety as well doesn't it?
SW	What about financial decisions?
NT4	No.
SW	So what about for example the Enterprise Group that were working to a budget do you think it's good that they had an idea of how much money they had and had to use that because you know financial decisions need to be made. Or what about say we were planning to buy some equipment for wet breaks in classes and each class was given say £70 do you think it should be up to the classes how they spend that money?
NT4	No
SW	So do you think it should be up to the teacher?
NT4	Yes.
SW	That's fine. So what about school meals – do you think pupils should have input into school meals?
NT4	What do you mean? The choice of food or...
SW	Just anything to do with it – could be plastic trays or metal cutlery – anything to do with it.
NT4	They could be asked their opinions – yes to see what they prefer.
SW	And is there anything else you can think of that pupils in school could be involved in that we're not involved in already?
NT4	No, I think we cover just about everything here that we could possibly do.
SW	That's great – thanks very much.

Recorded Interview: NT4 (2010)

(General introduction as for 2010 interviews)

SW	Thinking about the input pupils have into aspects of our school, how much would you say this has increased over the last 3 years?
	<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; align-items: flex-end;"> <div style="text-align: center;">1 No change at all</div> <div style="text-align: center;">2</div> <div style="text-align: center;">3</div> <div style="text-align: center;">4</div> <div style="text-align: center;">5</div> <div style="text-align: center;">6 A great deal of change</div> </div>
NT4	A 4.
SW	Right and what changes do you think have had the biggest impact?
NT4	The pupils have been given the opportunities to voice their opinions on school matters.
SW	Right, and why do you think that's got an impact, why do you think that's a good thing?
NT4	Well they're now able to say what they like – so with the school menus and things. What they would like fund raising for..
SW	Good, so are there any changes have had not much of an impact do you think?
NT4	I don't really know on that one because I'm not classroom based. So I don't really see what goes on in the classroom a lot.
SW	Fine, so what's the best change that pupil voice has brought about?
NT4	I would say they are more aware of world issues.
SW	Right – so are there any changes that you think shouldn't have happened or would prefer hadn't happened?
NT4	I'm not sure if it does happen here but I don't think that, I don't agree that they should be involved in staff appointments.
SW	No – we haven't done that here. So, in your opinion, do you think the development of pupil voice has had an impact on your own role within school – either positively or negatively?
	<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; align-items: flex-end;"> <div style="text-align: center;">1 It has had a Negative impact</div> <div style="text-align: center;">2</div> <div style="text-align: center;">3 No impact at all</div> <div style="text-align: center;">4</div> <div style="text-align: center;">5</div> <div style="text-align: center;">6 It has had a positive impact</div> </div>
NT4	I don't think it has on mine, no. 3.
SW	Right, and in your opinion, do you think the development of pupil voice has had an impact on the curriculum – either your own positively or negatively?
	<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; align-items: flex-end;"> <div style="text-align: center;">1 It has had a Negative impact</div> <div style="text-align: center;">2</div> <div style="text-align: center;">3 No impact at all</div> <div style="text-align: center;">4</div> <div style="text-align: center;">5</div> <div style="text-align: center;">6 It has had a positive impact</div> </div>
NT4	I don't know not being classroom based.
SW	That's great – well thank you very much.



## Recorded Interview: NT5 (2009)

(General introduction as for 2009 interviews)

SW	If you were to rate yourself on a scale of 1 to 6 where 1 was you don't think pupils should have any say at all to 6 where you think pupils should have a great deal of say as to what goes on in school, where do you think you would place yourself at this point in time, 1 to 6?
NT5	About a 5, I would think, 5.
SW	Why – why would you think that?
NT5	(pause)
SW	So to help you there - what do you think the advantages of involving pupils in decisions about school could be?
NT5	Well knowing what they want really what they think and then we can deliver what they want hopefully, but not to the extent when they have the run of what, of what is ...
SW	That's fine, just say what you think..... So you've said there it can give you an idea of what the pupils actually want but at the same time they don't run the school. Who do you think should be responsible for controlling that balance between what say we give the pupils and delivering it for them?
NT5	Well, us as a staff really, not, not one person. I think everyone should be able to get together and decide but with the children as well but I think that's always done here anyway..
SW	So what do you think are the disadvantages – so for you that's why it's a 5 and not a 6 so what do you think the downside might be?
NT5	The children, it must be positive for them to see that they're being listened to and that their voices are being heard just in what we do generally in what we do in school. A lot of it is led from them isn't it? I think it's more of an advantage.
SW	Are there any areas where you think pupils shouldn't be consulted? For example, staff appointments?
NT5	Yes – I think they maybe wouldn't look as deeply into a person as you would. You mean like for the interviews?
SW	Yes
NT5	No, I don't think that that would be necessary
SW	We've done a bit in school with the pupils giving staff a bit of feedback into their teaching and learning so that say a teacher delivers a lesson and ask pupils for some sort of feedback about how it went – thumbs up, thumbs down, comments in books, what do you think about that?
NT5	I like that yes, yes.
SW	What sort of strategies have you seen around school in your role as classroom assistant?
NT5	Well I know Jennifer did a lot emm and I think the children just, I think it makes them feel more comfortable that the teachers are listening to see what their response is and they can build on that then can't they?
SW	Looking at all the aspects we get involved in as a school and maybe some that we don't yet but we might do in future, which of the following aspects do you think pupils should be involved with in school, like the School Council?
NT5	Yes, yes
SW	Anti-bullying Committee?
NT5	Yes
SW	Emm..Curriculum decisions and I'm going to explain a bit more about what the teachers and I have been discussing in staff meetings. We're looking ahead to the new term when we're doing the creative curriculum approach and the idea there is to get the pupils more involved in planning from the outset so, emm say for example the topic was going to be space, in the old days they (teachers) would plan out what exactly was going to be taught in that topic to ensure that all the different areas in the national curriculum was being done and then would deliver it, the idea is that now when they have a topic like space, the teacher has a broad idea what they might do, shares that with the class at an early point and gets their input on what they'd like to learn and then set about learning some of these things rather than it being planned in detail by the teacher – what do you think about that approach?

NT5	It's a nice idea but how do you go about that approach? What about resources and things? Would they be bringing things in and ...
SW	Well I think it's a new approach for us so there are boxes and packs of stuff you can get so if you know you're doing space in the autumn term then you can plan to have these sort of resources then anyway. But if the children came up with some ideas that hadn't been planned in advance by the teacher then it would just be a case of trying to work round it. But I think the main idea is that the teacher may think they would cover say 5 main ideas but if the children came up with a different idea that they were interested in then the teacher would accommodate that in the planning.
NT5	Yes it might have a positive affect if it's an area they are really interested in and they want to go in.
SW	So you're quite comfortable with that?
NT5	Yes, yes.
SW	Planning the outdoor environment which we've done a bit of already with the tyre park?
NT5	Yes, yes
SW	Input to Governing Body Meetings or to the Governors? Maybe about work that they've done?
NT5	Seeing how the Year 6s have dealt with putting their ideas across in front of so many people I think it could work, yes. I'm not sure about the younger ones, but the older ones yes.
SW	We've talked about Teaching and Learning. What about planning the layout of the classrooms – how things are organised in classes? Do you think there's a place for pupils being involved in that?
NT5	Yes certainly, I think Emma does a bit of that where it's a trusting thing – if you sit with this person then...
SW	And emm financial decisions? What about financial decisions?
NT5	I don't know whether they would understand enough to do that.
SW	So that could be something as broad as how the Governors spend the budget or it could be children given their budget to spend – for example, playground equipment.
NT5	If it was something like that then yes they could get used to dealing with something like that. They could find out the value – how much things cost.
SW	School meal input?
NT5	Yes
SW	Anything else you can think of?
NT5	Nothing off the top of my head. I think we just cover so much anyway that they're involved in from the start.
SW	That's fine – it's OK – thank you.

## Recorded Interview: NT5 (2010)

(General introduction as for 2010 interviews)

SW	Thinking about the input pupils have into aspects of our school, how much would you say this has increased over the last 3 years?
	<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; align-items: center;"> <div style="text-align: center;">1 No change at all</div> <div style="text-align: center;">2</div> <div style="text-align: center;">3</div> <div style="text-align: center;">4</div> <div style="text-align: center;">5</div> <div style="text-align: center;">6 A great deal of change</div> </div>
NT5	I'd put a 4.
SW	And why's that?
NT5	I think the SNAG group's had the biggest input from what I've seen just walking through the staffroom in their meetings and things – it seems really positive. The people from whomever it is that makes the dinners really sound like they want to do something about what the children are telling them and (the cook) seems great as well to take things on board. I've put the Mediators as well because I think they can resolve a lot of the situations before they even get to us, so emm. And the PARs, with the new building.
SW	That's good – I think you've just answered questions 2 and 3 there too!
NT5	Yes (laughs)
SW	And what changes do you think we've put into place that haven't had much of an impact?
NT5	Well I think because of the others, the PARs and the SNAG group, the School Council seems to be a bit quiet at the minute. I don't whether that's something that I'm missing, emm, but....
SW	Well, I think part of it is that (teacher's name) hasn't been in and she's been running the School Council. But I think your point is valid because they're perhaps not doing so much as before because of the other groups who are now doing some of the things the School Council might have done.
NT5	Yes, yes I think so.
SW	That's fine – so what's the best change that pupil voice has brought about?
NT5	Well, em, I think the SNAG group is a positive – probably the best but we've got the PARs as well – it's helping them feel more involved in what's going on – what the new building is all about – thinking about the coat pegs and things.. They've all actually had an involvement in all of that. They've done the questionnaires..
SW	Yes. So what about things like teaching and learning and the fact that children have a bit more input here..?
NT5	Yes, I think it's great, I think the children...I'm just thinking about (a teacher) yesterday when she was teaching – the children seemed happy about what they were learning about things like the rainforest which is what the children were learning about. And she was trying to find out something on the internet and it was hard to find something that was age appropriate for the younger class. So it might sometimes be difficult to find resources. But the children were still getting a lot out of it...
SW	Yes, that's good. And are there any changes that we've done that you would have preferred hadn't happened?
NT5	I can't think of any.. sorry.
SW	That's OK, don't worry.
NT5	I think everything that has happened has been positive...
SW	So, do you think the development of pupil voice has had an impact on your own role within school – either positively or negatively?
	<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; align-items: center;"> <div style="text-align: center;">1 It has had a Negative impact</div> <div style="text-align: center;">2</div> <div style="text-align: center;">3 No impact at all</div> <div style="text-align: center;">4</div> <div style="text-align: center;">5</div> <div style="text-align: center;">6 It has had a positive impact</div> </div>
NT5	Not much – I can't think of anything.. about a 4 I think.
SW	In your opinion, do you think the development of pupil voice has had an impact on the curriculum – either your own positively or negatively?
	<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; align-items: center;"> <div style="text-align: center;">1 It has had a Negative impact</div> <div style="text-align: center;">2</div> <div style="text-align: center;">3 No impact at all</div> <div style="text-align: center;">4</div> <div style="text-align: center;">5</div> <div style="text-align: center;">6 It has had a positive impact</div> </div>
NT5	I think it's had a positive impact so I'm going for a 6 there.
SW	And why have you put a 6?
NT5	I think the children are more likely – they're more likely to learn from it and had some input into what they're going to learn.
SW	That's great – well thank you very much.

## Recorded Interview: NT6 (2009)

(General introduction as for 2009 interviews)

SW	If you were to rate yourself on a scale of 1 to 6 where 1 was you don't think pupils should have any say at all to 6 where you think pupils should have a great deal of say as to what goes on in school, where do you think you would place yourself at this point in time, 1 to 6?
NT6	4
SW	4 – and why is that?
NT6	Em I'm not sure really. I think that if you let them have a lot to say them maybes they'll have too much – I can't really.. I know what I want to say but I can't think...
SW	Well let me try and make it a bit easier for you... What do you think the good thing is – why do you let them have any say at all? What are the advantages of giving them some sort of say about how things happen in school and how they get involved?
NT6	Because it's their rights, they love that sort of thing – like the Breakthrough Boys and what's the other one called... the Pupils as Researchers.. because when we were doing them questionnaires one of the little boys said to me I think more people should be on the Breakthrough Boys because there's not many people on it and it's really fun – things like that I think it's great for them to have some input.
SW	So what do you think the disadvantages might be... why don't you think it should be 6?
NT6	Emm I don't know - they would have too much, too much say as to what goes on and it should be the teachers who, like telling the children what to do, rather than children ruling and telling.... (pause)
SW	So who do you think should be responsible for that balance between getting what the teachers and adults within the school think and what the pupils choose. Because if there's a balance if we listen to children and we take account of some of the things that they have to say and we ask them to be involved in some of the things then who should be the person or the people that make sure that it doesn't all get out of hand.
NT6	Emm Probably the teachers or the Governors, because they would be not as involved if it was the governors. While we're more involved in our... and we want more of, our say..
SW	You know you're the first person to say that – the first person to make that point...
SW	So are there any areas where you think pupils shouldn't be involved in making decisions for example, staff appointments – the interview process. Do you think they should be involved in that or not?
NT6	Emm I don't know really on that one. I think it would be good because the children would be able to see the kind of people who.. who they would be dealing with, who may be their next teacher or Teaching Assistant. Actually, I think it is a good idea.
SW	There's a list of things that we've either had pupils involved in over the past couple of years or are planning to do to involve children with and I'm going to read them off one at a time and I just want to ask you whether we should get children involved or not. So for example the School Council?
NT6	Yes
SW	Anti-bullying Committee?
NT6	Yes
SW	Curriculum decisions – like next term what we're planning to do with the creative curriculum say they were doing a topic on space – say for the teacher to say right we're going to be doing space this term – these are some of the areas we might look at, what do you think – is there anything else we should look at as a class? What would you like to learn about?
NT6	Yes – yes I think that's a good idea.
SW	So why do you think that was a good idea?
NT6	They have their input on what kind of things they'd like to be learning, what kind of... you might not cover a specific thing that the children might want to cover and so that would be quite good for them. They'd have a say in that.
SW	Planning the outdoor environment?
NT6	Yes, Yes – because they like playing outside. That would be a nice one for them to be involved in.
SW	Input to Governing Body Meetings or to the Governors? And that might be about work they've done in school or something they've found out about.
NT6	Yes, I think it might be nice for them to share what they've done with other people.
SW	So do you see them doing that in person or do you see that as a report or both?
NT6	Could be both – would be nice in person because they could show what kind of things they've done and talk through it, how they've done it, what they've learned from it.

SW	Very good. Teaching and Learning – when you’ve worked with teachers have you seen any examples of teachers asking their pupils for feedback to lessons, have you enjoyed it, thumbs up, thumbs down, that sort of thing.
NT6	Yes
SW	And how do you think that works? What sort of examples have you seen of teachers asking pupils about the learning..
NT6	Xxxx does that quite a lot actually. If we’ve done, if we’re sat on the carpet she’ll say have you understood that properly or do I need to go through that again, or have you enjoyed doing that?
SW	And how do you think that works for the children?
NT6	Yes – I think that’s good – some of them might be a little bit scared to say that they don’t understand but I think the more you do it the less, because some children might say I don’t know what to do but that’s all right they’ll think well I don’t understand either.. so yes I think that’s good for them.
SW	What about the layout of the classrooms – organising the way the classroom is set-up. Do you think pupils have a place to have a say in that?
NT6	Emm I don’t know - I’m not sure of that one because I think we just have the classroom how we want it. I don’t think we’ve ever asked the children what, how they want things set up or does this look OK here or would that be better over there – I don’t know.
SW	Do you think that’s something that people might give a go?
NT6	Yes, yes.
SW	What about financial decisions? Children making financial decisions so it could either be as part of the whole school budget or it could be a delegated budget for example the Enterprise Group and how they spend the money?
NT6	Yes, Yes I think that’s good.
SW	So discrete areas for a specific issue?
NT6	Yes that’s good.
SW	School meal input? School meals?
NT6	Em – yes actually I think that would be good. Because when I was at school I was dead fussy and I was never on school dinners and I think it would be nice for the children to have a say on what they would like obviously within reason, so yes.
SW	Anything else you can think of? What about the new building?
NT6	Do they have a say?
SW	Well do you think in any aspect of the new building that it would be good for the children to have a say in that?
NT6	Yes I think it will be because they’ll feel like they’re being part of it, something to do with it and it’s not this is how it is and this is how it’s going to look – I think they’d feel like, quite, quite involved in the process.
SW	Is there anything else you can think of that we don’t do in school that we might do to get pupils views or to get them involved?
NT6	I don’t think so.
SW	That’s great – thank you very much.

## Recorded Interview: NT6 (2010)

(General introduction as for 2010 interviews)

SW	Thinking about the input pupils have into aspects of our school, how much would you say this has increased over the last 3 years?
	<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; padding: 0 10px;"> <span>1 No change at all</span> <span>2</span> <span>3</span> <span>4</span> <span>5</span> <span>6 A great deal of change</span> </div>
NT6	Emm... 5 for that.
SW	And why do you think that?
NT6	Emm... the Pupils As Researchers and I think they've had a lot of input for the new building like with the coat pegs and things through questionnaires. And I think are they involved with taking the pictures of the building as well
SW	Yes, that's right.
NT6	Well I think that's good too.
SW	And why do you think that's good?
NT6	Because it's getting the children involved and letting them have their say and it's their ideas and they feel they've had some kind of say like in the new building by doing that.
SW	Good, so what changes have had the least impact do you think?
NT6	I couldn't really think of any changes that... you know..
SW	Fine, so going on. What's the best change that pupil voice has brought about?
NT6	I think again the Pupils As Researchers. I think that's because I don't really have much to do with the mediators because they are more to do with the older ones, like the SNAG group. But just again because of all the input they have had to do with the new building.
SW	And what about teaching and learning and the input pupils have here? You know teachers are adapting their curriculum to the pupils..
NT6	Emm... which ones that? (laughter)
SW	Well just generally about changes that pupil voice has brought about – you know the teachers are planning just the topic and then they ask the kids what they want to learn.
NT6	Yes, yes. Well it's got the positives and the negatives. Like we're doing the rainforest at the minute and the children want to do that and it ties in with Australia and world-wide awareness but (teacher) said yesterday that she couldn't find much to do with that certain topic on the internet at their level (middle infants).. so it has its ups and downs..
SW	Yes, and are there any changes that you wish hadn't happened?
NT6	Not that hadn't happened but when they're coming round to do the questionnaires it can take a long time when you're trying to do the maths or whatever – it seems to take a long time out of your lesson. Maybe just to try and when they're doing the questionnaire maybes think of shorter questions just to try and make that a quicker process.
SW	In your opinion, do you think the development of pupil voice has had an impact on your own role within school – either positively or negatively?
	<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; padding: 0 10px;"> <span>1 It has had a Negative impact</span> <span>2</span> <span>3 No impact at all</span> <span>4</span> <span>5</span> <span>6 It has had a positive impact</span> </div>
NT6	I don't think it has on my role so I'd give a 4.
SW	In your opinion, do you think the development of pupil voice has had an impact on the curriculum – either your own positively or negatively?
	<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; padding: 0 10px;"> <span>1 It has had a Negative impact</span> <span>2</span> <span>3 No impact at all</span> <span>4</span> <span>5</span> <span>6 It has had a positive impact</span> </div>
NT6	I've put that as a 4 again – not really on the curriculum but I think it's great for them for the self-esteem and confidence – the feeling they are having a say in what's happening so a 4 really.
SW	That's great – well thank you very much.

## **Appendix 5**

## Questionnaire for Teachers

### Summer 2008

As you are aware, we have been looking at pupil voice activities within school this year. I would like to collect your views as to any possible impact these activities may be having, both positively and negatively. I would like to know your personal views on this before the end of this term so I can draw up our development plan for the forthcoming year. Please be as honest as you can as this will help me formulate a more realistic plan.

QUESTION	ALWAYS	OFTEN	SOMETIMES	NEVER
1) I understand what is meant by the term pupil voice.				
2) Pupil voice activities take place in my school.				
3) Pupil voice activities take place in my class.				
4) Pupil voice activities have had a positive impact on my class this year.				
5) Please give an example of (4) if appropriate.				
6) Pupil voice activities have had a negative impact on my class.	ALWAYS	OFTEN	SOMETIMES	NEVER
7) Please give an example of (6) if appropriate.				
8) The most successful pupil voice activities this year have been: (Please rate each from 1 – 6 with 1 being totally unsuccessful and 6 being very successful). Please list any others you can think of.	PAR <input type="text"/> Playground	School Council <input type="text"/>	Pupil <input type="text"/> Questionnaire	
	PAR <input type="text"/> Newspaper	Sports <input type="text"/> Leaders	Pupil input to <input type="text"/> Travel Plan	
	OTHER:			
9) I think other aspects within school suffer because of pupil voice activities.	ALWAYS	OFTEN	SOMETIMES	NEVER
10) I think pupil voice activities help our school to grow and develop. (Please give an example if you can).				

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire – the information gathered will help us to further improve our school.



## Teacher Questionnaire Results Summary

### Summer 2008

QUESTION	ALWAYS	OFTEN	SOMETIMES	NEVER	No Respons e
1) I understand what is meant by the term pupil voice.	1	3	3	0	0
2) Pupil voice activities take place in my school.	1	3	3	0	0
3) Pupil voice activities take place in my class.	0	2	4	0	1
4) Pupil voice activities have had a positive impact on my class this year.	2	1	3	1	0
5) Please give an example of (4) if appropriate.	Y5 Sports Leaders – very well organised at Framwellgate SD Multiskills event. Plan, Do, Review – this takes place a lot in our class so that children have an input in their learning. Certainly the opportunities the children have had to be involved in the newspaper and to work as Sports Leaders encouraged raised self-esteem, an increased enthusiasm for their involvement in the life of the school was appreciated and valued.				
6) Pupil voice activities have had a negative impact on my class.	0	0	3	4	0
7) Please give an example of (6) if appropriate.					
8) The most successful pupil voice activities this year have been.  (Please rate each from 1 – 6 with 1 being totally unsuccessful and 6 being very successful).  Please list any others you can think of.	PARs Playground 1, 3x 2, 6, nr		School Council 3, 3x 5, 4, 6	Pupil Questionnaire 3x 3, 3x 4	
	PARs Newspaper 2, 3, 2x 4, 2x6		Sports Leaders 5, 5x 6	Pupil input to Travel Plan 2x 1, 2x 3, 6 No response x 1	
	I'm not sure that I could confidently rate the success of these activities because although I know they take place in school I'm not sure to what extent they are successful.				
9) I think other aspects within school suffer because of pupil voice activities.			5	1	1 unsure
Comment	Sometimes: If there's only a few children involved they miss out on the general lessons although they can catch up.				
10) I think pupil voice activities help our school to grow and develop. (Please give an example if you can).	1	2	4	0	0
Comment	Always: It allows children to feel more of a part of their school, more valued and appreciated.				

## **Appendix 6**

## PUPIL QUESTIONNAIRE

**Date: May 2008**

We would like to know how you feel about being part of our school community. Please tell us what you think – remember there are no right or wrong answers.

### **FEELING INCLUDED**

	<i>Always</i>	<i>Nearly Always</i>	<i>Sometimes</i>	<i>Never</i>
<b>1. ABOUT BEING IN MY CLASS</b>				
I feel I belong to my class				
I feel my class is a good place to be				
I feel I am listened to as much as any other pupil				
I feel my views count in this class				
I believe my teacher trusts me				
<b>2. ABOUT BEING IN MY SCHOOL</b>				
I feel I belong to my school				
I feel my school is a good place to be				
I feel I'm important in this school				
I feel my views count in this school				
<b>3. If you have time and would like to, you can draw two pictures or write about a time when:</b>				
you feel your views were listened to	you feel your views were not listened to			
<b>4. Can you think of any ways in which pupils could be more included in our school?</b>				

### **FEELING IN CONTROL**

	<i>Always</i>	<i>Nearly Always</i>	<i>Sometimes</i>	<i>Never</i>
<b>5. ABOUT BEING IN MY CLASS</b>				
I like being in my class				
I learn things which are useful to me				
I learn things which are interesting				
If there was something I wanted to learn about I think my teacher would try and teach it				
My teacher checks with the class that we have understood things				
I feel I can ask my teacher to go over things again if I am not sure				
When she is teaching, my teacher goes too fast				
When she is teaching, my teacher goes too slow				

6. ABOUT BEING IN MY SCHOOL				
If I have a problem, my school tries to help me				
I think pupils in this school help make some of the decisions				
I think the School Council helps pupils to get things done in school				
If I had a good idea or felt worried I feel I could share this with my teacher				
If I had good idea or felt worried I feel I could share this with my head teacher				
I have used the worry bin				
7. If you have time and would like to, you can draw two pictures or write about something:				
you would like to learn about in school	You don't like learning about			

#### FEELING CONFIDENT

	<i>Always</i>	<i>Nearly Always</i>	<i>Sometimes</i>	<i>Never</i>
8. ABOUT BEING IN MY CLASS				
I am good at learning science				
I am good at learning maths.				
I am good at learning English				
I am good at learning topic work				
9. Please draw two pictures or write about something:				
you are good at learning	you find more difficult to learn			
	<i>Always</i>	<i>Nearly Always</i>	<i>Sometimes</i>	<i>Never</i>
10. ABOUT BEING IN MY SCHOOL				
I feel I do well at this school				
Teachers at this school like me				
11. Please draw two pictures or write about something:				
That might help you do even better at school	That stops you doing as well as you could at school			

*Thank you very much - your views will help us to make our school even better!*

## PUPIL QUESTIONNAIRE

**Date: May 2009**

We would like to know how you feel about being part of our school community. Please tell us what you think – remember there are no right or wrong answers.

### **FEELING INCLUDED**

	<i>Always</i>	<i>Nearly Always</i>	<i>Sometimes</i>	<i>Never</i>
<b>1. ABOUT BEING IN MY CLASS</b>				
I feel I belong to my class				
I feel my class is a good place to be				
I feel I am listened to as much as any other pupil				
I feel my views count in this class				
I believe my teacher trusts me				
<b>2. ABOUT BEING IN MY SCHOOL</b>				
I feel I belong to my school				
I feel my school is a good place to be				
I feel I'm important in this school				
I feel my views count in this school				
<b>3. If you have time and would like to, you can draw two pictures or write about a time when:</b>				
you feel your views were listened to	you feel your views were not listened to			
<b>4. Can you think of any ways in which pupils could be more included in our school?</b>				

### **FEELING IN CONTROL**

	<i>Always</i>	<i>Nearly Always</i>	<i>Sometimes</i>	<i>Never</i>
<b>5. ABOUT BEING IN MY CLASS</b>				
I like being in my class				
I learn things which are useful to me				
I learn things which are interesting				
If there was something I wanted to learn about I think my teacher would try and teach it				
My teacher checks with the class that we have understood things				
I feel I can ask my teacher to go over things again if I am not sure				
When she is teaching, my teacher goes too fast				
When she is teaching, my teacher goes too slow				































<b>6. ABOUT BEING IN MY SCHOOL</b>				
If I have a problem, my school tries to help me				
I think pupils in this school help make some of the decisions				
I think the School Council helps pupils to get things done in school				
If I had a good idea or felt worried I feel I could share this with my teacher				
If I had good idea or felt worried I feel I could share this with my head teacher				
I have used the worry bin				
<b>7. If you have time and would like to, you can draw two pictures or write about something:</b>				
you would like to learn about in school		You don't like learning about		
<b>FEELING CONFIDENT</b>				
	<i>Always</i>	<i>Nearly Always</i>	<i>Sometimes</i>	<i>Never</i>
<b>8. ABOUT BEING IN MY CLASS</b>				
I am good at learning science				
I am good at learning maths.				
I am good at learning English				
I am good at learning topic work				
<b>9. Please draw two pictures or write about something:</b>				
you are good at learning		you find more difficult to learn		
	<i>Always</i>	<i>Nearly Always</i>	<i>Sometimes</i>	<i>Never</i>
<b>10. ABOUT BEING IN MY SCHOOL</b>				
I feel I do well at this school				
Teachers at this school like me				
<b>11. Please draw two pictures or write about something:</b>				
That might help you do even better at school		That stops you doing as well as you could at school		
<b>12. Please tick if you have been involved in any of the following:</b>				
School Council		Mini-bud		
School Newspaper		Buddy		
Enterprise Group		Mediator		
Pupils as Researchers		Sports Leader		

*Thank you very much - your views will help us to make our school even better!*











































## PUPIL QUESTIONNAIRE: INFANTS

**Date: May 2010**

### **FEELING INCLUDED**

<b>Please circle your answer.</b>	 Yes	 Don't know	 No
<b>1. ABOUT BEING IN MY CLASS</b>			
I feel I belong to my class			
I feel my class is a good place to be			
I feel I am listened to as much as any other pupil			
I feel my views count in this class			
I believe my teacher trusts me			
<b>2. ABOUT BEING IN MY SCHOOL</b>			
I feel I belong to my school			
I feel my school is a good place to be			
I feel I'm important in this school			
I feel my views count in this school			

## FEELING IN CONTROL

<b>3. ABOUT BEING IN MY CLASS</b>			
I like being in my class			
I learn things which are useful to me			
I learn things which are interesting			
If there was something I wanted to learn about I think my teacher would try and teach it			
My teacher checks with the class that we have understood things			
I feel I can ask my teacher to go over things again if I am not sure			
When she is teaching, my teacher goes too fast			
When she is teaching, my teacher goes too slow			
<b>4. ABOUT BEING IN MY SCHOOL</b>			
If I have a problem, my school tries to help me			
I think pupils in this school help make some of the decisions			
I think the School Council helps pupils to get things done in school			
If I had a good idea or felt worried I feel I could share this with my teacher			
If I had good idea or felt worried I feel I could share this with my head teacher			
I have used the worry bin			









5. If you would like to, you can draw two pictures or write about something:	
you enjoy learning	you don't enjoy learning

### FEELING CONFIDENT

6. Please draw two pictures or write about something:	
you are good at learning	you find more difficult to learn

### 7. ABOUT BEING IN MY SCHOOL

I am doing well at school			
Teachers like me			







### 8. Please draw two pictures or write about something:

That might help you do even better at school	That stops you doing as well as you could at school

### 9. Please tick if you are a:

School Council Member		Mini-bud	
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### 10. Would you like to be:

On the School Council			
A Mini-bud			

*Thank you very much - your views will help us to make our school even better!*

## **PUPIL QUESTIONNAIRE: JUNIORS**

**Date: May 2010**

We would like to know how you feel about being part of our school community. Please tell us what you think – remember there are no right or wrong answers.

### **FEELING INCLUDED**

	<i>Always</i>	<i>Nearly Always</i>	<i>Sometimes</i>	<i>Never</i>
<b>1. ABOUT BEING IN MY CLASS</b>				
I feel I belong to my class				
I feel my class is a good place to be				
I feel I am listened to as much as any other pupil				
I feel my views count in this class				
I believe my teacher trusts me				
<b>2. ABOUT BEING IN MY SCHOOL</b>				
I feel I belong to my school				
I feel my school is a good place to be				
I feel I'm important in this school				
I feel my views count in this school				
<b>3. If you have time and would like to, you can draw two pictures or write about a time when:</b>				
you feel your views were listened to	you feel your views were not listened to			
<b>4. Can you think of any ways in which pupils could be more included in our school?</b>				

### **FEELING IN CONTROL**

	<i>Always</i>	<i>Nearly Always</i>	<i>Sometimes</i>	<i>Never</i>
<b>5. ABOUT BEING IN MY CLASS</b>				
I like being in my class				
I learn things which are useful to me				
I learn things which are interesting				
If there was something I wanted to learn about I think my teacher would try and teach it				
My teacher checks with the class that we have understood things				
I feel I can ask my teacher to go over things again if I am not sure				
When she is teaching, my teacher goes too fast				
When she is teaching, my teacher goes too slow				
<b>6. ABOUT BEING IN MY SCHOOL</b>				
If I have a problem, my school tries to help me				
I think pupils in this school help make some of the decisions				
I think the School Council helps pupils to get things done in school				
If I had a good idea or felt worried I feel I could share this with my teacher				
If I had good idea or felt worried I feel I could share this with my head teacher				
I have used the worry bin				

7. If you have time and would like to, you can draw two pictures or write about something:	
you would like to learn about in school	You don't like learning about

**FEELING CONFIDENT**

	<i>Always</i>	<i>Nearly Always</i>	<i>Sometimes</i>	<i>Never</i>
8. ABOUT BEING IN MY CLASS				
I am good at learning science				
I am good at learning maths.				
I am good at learning English				
I am good at learning topic work				

9. Please draw two pictures or write about something:				
you are good at learning	you find more difficult to learn			
	<i>Always</i>	<i>Nearly Always</i>	<i>Sometimes</i>	<i>Never</i>

10. ABOUT BEING IN MY SCHOOL				
I feel I do well at this school				
Teachers at this school like me				

11. Please draw two pictures or write about something:	
That might help you do even better at school	That stops you doing as well as you could at school

12. Please tick if you have been involved in any of the following, or would like to be:					
	I am/have been involved	I would like to be		I am/have been involved	I would like to be
School Council			Mini-bud		
School Newspaper			Buddy		
Enterprise Group			Mediator		
Pupils as Researchers			Sports Leader		

*Thank you very much - your views will help us to make our school even better!*

## PUPIL QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS SUMMARY

**Date: May 2008**

We would like to know how you feel about being part of our school community. Please tell us what you think – remember there are no right or wrong answers.

### **FEELING INCLUDED**

CHILDREN INCLUDED

	Always	Nearly Always	Sometimes	Never	No Response
<b>1. ABOUT BEING IN MY CLASS</b>					
I feel I belong to my class	55%	27%	14%	4%	0
I feel my class is a good place to be	49%	24%	21%	6%	0
I feel I am listened to as much as any other pupil	45%	22%	26%	6%	1%
I feel my views count in this class	45%	20%	29%	7%	0
I believe my teacher trusts me	64%	15%	16%	5%	0
<b>2. ABOUT BEING IN MY SCHOOL</b>					
I feel I belong to my school	55%	22%	21%	3%	0
I feel my school is a good place to be	51%	21%	19%	10%	0
I feel I'm important in this school	35%	18%	28%	19%	0
I feel my views count in this school	34%	18%	38%	10%	0
<b>3. If you have time and would like to, you can draw two pictures or write about a time when:</b>					
<b>you feel your views were listened to</b>			<b>you feel your views were not listened to</b>		
Group work; Speaking in front of the class; Sharing ideas with others; When playing with my friends - they trust me; When I put my hand up in class; When sitting on the carpet; When I gave my ideas in the maths sorting activity.			When too many people are talking at the same time; When my friend pretends to talk to someone else when I try to talk to him; When my friend wasn't listening to me; When I was hurt;		
<b>4. Can you think of any ways in which pupils could be more included in our school?</b>					
More clubs; When my teacher told people to "sh" so others could hear what I was saying; Everyone to agree to do the right thing so everyone can be happy; Take turns on the yard with the equipment; Everyone should have a turn; People to put their hand up more instead of shouting out; To ask us for more of our ideas for games; I would like more chances to show my trophies at school; I would like to say what we need for the garden; I would like more opportunities to help other people if they need it;					

### **FEELING IN CONTROL**

	<i>Always</i>	<i>Nearly Always</i>	<i>Sometimes</i>	<i>Never</i>	<i>No Response</i>
<b>5. ABOUT BEING IN MY CLASS</b>					
I like being in my class	51%	21%	22%	6%	1%
I learn things which are useful to me	47%	26%	24%	2%	1%
I learn things which are interesting	46%	21%	29%	4%	1%
If there was something I wanted to learn about I think my teacher would try and teach it	41%	19%	26%	10%	3%
My teacher checks with the class that we have understood things	71%	10%	17%	1%	2%
I feel I can ask my teacher to go over things again if I am not sure	60%	13%	21%	5%	1%
When she is teaching, my teacher goes too fast	6%	3%	32%	57%	2%
When she is teaching, my teacher goes too slow	7%	3%	24%	64%	2%

6. ABOUT BEING IN MY SCHOOL					
	<i>Always</i>	<i>Nearly Always</i>	<i>Sometimes</i>	<i>Never</i>	<i>No Response</i>
If I have a problem, my school tries to help me	37%	15%	31%	17%	1%
I think pupils in this school help make some of the decisions	38%	17%	34%	8%	3%
I think the School Council helps pupils to get things done in school	40%	11%	28%	17%	4%
If I had a good idea or felt worried I feel I could share this with my teacher	49%	19%	21%	9%	3%
If I had good idea or felt worried I feel I could share this with my head teacher	28%	7%	28%	35%	3%
I have used the worry bin	5%	2%	28%	58%	7%
7. If you have time and would like to, you can draw two pictures or write about something:					
you would like to learn about in school	You don't like learning about				
Answers included the following More maths; Dragons; Toys from the past; Kangaroos; Sharks; Dinosaurs; Olden days; More sport; More cooking; More science; Plants and animals; More History; ICT; Paper folding work; More art; More science;	Answers included the following: Science; Writing; Florence Nightingale; Ships; Stories; Maths; Division;				
FEELING CONFIDENT					
	<i>Always</i>	<i>Nearly Always</i>	<i>Sometimes</i>	<i>Never</i>	<i>No Response</i>
8. ABOUT BEING IN MY CLASS					
I am good at learning science	33%	20%	35%	10%	3%
I am good at learning maths.	44%	20%	22%	12%	2%
I am good at learning English	50%	19%	20%	10%	2%
I am good at learning topic work	52%	19%	22%	6%	2%
9. Please draw two pictures or write about something:					
you are good at learning	you find more difficult to learn				
Common answers: Everything; Most things	Common answers: Nothing; maths;				
Other answers included: Maths; Art; History; Science; Literacy; Rhyming words;	Other answers included: History; division; Geography;				
	<i>Always</i>	<i>Nearly Always</i>	<i>Sometimes</i>	<i>Never</i>	<i>No Response</i>
10. ABOUT BEING IN MY SCHOOL					
I feel I do well at this school	46%	30%	19%	4%	1%
Teachers at this school like me	53%	15%	24%	6%	2%
11. Please draw two pictures or write about something:					
That might help you do even better at school	That stops you doing as well as you could at school				
Common answers included: To listen more; some more help from helpers; people around me to stop talking; for me to try harder	Common answers included: People talking; Other people distracting me; not enough sleep.				
Other answers included: My handwriting; To ask the teacher and not be shy; More displays to help me spell; the teacher explaining a bit more; have more maths equipment around;	Other answers included: People telling lies; watching scary TV movies at home; too many video games at home.				

*Thank you very much - your views will help us to make our school even better!*

## PUPIL QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS SUMMARY

**Date: May 2009**

We would like to know how you feel about being part of our school community. Please tell us what you think – remember there are no right or wrong answers.

### **FEELING INCLUDED**

	Always	Nearly Always	Sometimes	Never
1. ABOUT BEING IN MY CLASS				
I feel I belong to my class	69%	16%	13%	1%
I feel my class is a good place to be	62%	23%	15%	0
I feel I am listened to as much as any other pupil	58%	17%	20%	4%
I feel my views count in this class	61%	26%	11%	2%
I believe my teacher trusts me	79%	13%	7%	0
2. ABOUT BEING IN MY SCHOOL				
I feel I belong to my school	69%	15%	13%	2%
I feel my school is a good place to be	66%	19%	15%	1%
I feel I'm important in this school	51%	19%	21%	8%
I feel my views count in this school	49%	25%	20%	6%
3. If you have time and would like to, you can draw two pictures or write about a time when:				
you feel your views were listened to	you feel your views were not listened to			
At Playtime - 2%	At lunchtimes – 4%			
Teacher – 16%	Sometimes I put my hand up and I am not asked to answer – 4%			
Friends – 2%	Nothing – 19%			
Topic – 10%	Other children don't listen – 8%			
At carpet time/sharing news – 2%	Once during maths – 1%			
In family groups – 0.6%	Once during literacy – 0.6%			
PARs – 5%	On the playground – 3%			
When I was on School Council – 5%	When I told my story – 1%			
During lessons (not topic) – 2%				
4. Can you think of any ways in which pupils could be more included in our school?				
Everyone who puts their hand up can answer – 2%				
Everyone has a say in the school & included in more things – 7%				
Letting younger pupils be PARs, Enterprise group etc – 4%				
Being nice and playing together 10%				
Say more in Family Groups – 3%				
Doing more jobs in school - 5%				
Dinner Ladies believe us more – 0.6%				
To be on the School Council - 3%				
Helping my friends & others at break times - 3%				
Have more clubs/Sports – 2%				
To have a suggestions box – 1%				
More playtime to help more friends/do more things – 2%				
More ICT – 3%				
More people to join Breakthrough Boys because there aren't many – 1%				
Doing more exciting activities – 2%				
Let all of the class have a turn at assembly –1%				
Having a quiet room to talk to a teacher - 0.6%				

### **FEELING IN CONTROL**

	<i>Always</i>	<i>Nearly Always</i>	<i>Sometimes</i>	<i>Never</i>
<b>5. ABOUT BEING IN MY CLASS</b>				
I like being in my class	69%	19%	10%	2%
I learn things which are useful to me	69%	19%	11%	1%
I learn things which are interesting	63%	25%	10%	2%
If there was something I wanted to learn about I think my teacher would try and teach it	59%	20%	16%	4%
My teacher checks with the class that we have understood things	89%	7%	2%	2%
I feel I can ask my teacher to go over things again if I am not sure	80%	13%	3%	4%
When she is teaching, my teacher goes too fast	5%	4%	28%	63%
When she is teaching, my teacher goes too slow	5%	2%	14%	79%

<b>6. ABOUT BEING IN MY SCHOOL</b>				
If I have a problem, my school tries to help me	47%	28%	18%	7%
I think pupils in this school help make some of the decisions	47%	31%	19%	2%
I think the School Council helps pupils to get things done in school	46%	20%	25%	8%
If I had a good idea or felt worried I feel I could share this with my teacher	75%	17%	6%	2%
If I had good idea or felt worried I feel I could share this with my HT	44%	15%	28%	13%
I have used the worry bin	5%	2%	24%	69%
<b>7. If you have time and would like to, you can draw two pictures or write about something:</b>				
you would like to learn about in school	You don't like learning about			
Science - 15% Other Topics – 27% Maths - 15% Playing/PE - 3% French – 2% Learn about school's history – 1% English - 9% How foods are made – 5% History – 0.6% SEAL – 0.6% Drama – 1% Art – 2%	Nothing – 9% Singing – 0.6% Tidying – 0.8% History – 1% Maths – 16% Geography – 3% PE - 1% RE – 13% Homework – 0.6% Science – 3% SEAL – 0.6% Don't like going outside – 0.8% Don't like Sports' Day – 0.8% Doing hard work – 2% English – 14% What we do for SATs – 0.6%			

#### FEELING CONFIDENT

	<i>Always</i>	<i>Nearly Always</i>	<i>Sometimes</i>	<i>Never</i>
<b>8. ABOUT BEING IN MY CLASS</b>				
I am good at learning science	59%	19%	19%	3%
I am good at learning maths.	65%	21%	10%	4%
I am good at learning English	53%	31%	13%	4%
I am good at learning topic work	61%	22%	13%	4%
<b>9. Please draw two pictures or write about something:</b>				
you are good at learning	you find more difficult to learn			
English – 14% 4% 8% 14% 29% Writing – 24% Reading – 6% Maths – 12% 36% 33% 17% 41% 43% Science – 14% 4% 17% 14% 50% Art – 12% 14% 6% 17% 8% 18% 4% Music – 7% 4% PE – 7% 8% 4% 11% History – 38% 8% 18% 11% DT – 7% ICT – 25% 9% 4% Topic – 18% 7% 8% 4% 4% French – 6% Everything – 6% 7% News – 21% Geography – 4% 8% Swimming – 4%	English – 14% 21% 17% 14% 36% Handwriting – 4% Reading – 24% Writing – 12% Spelling – 4% Maths – 24% 36% 42% 17% 32% 4% 36% Science – 7% 8% 32% 7% RE – 8% 18% 14% PE – 4% Topic – 6% 7% 8% 4% History – 8% 4% 4% Geography – 4% 9% 4% French – 4% Nothing – 24% 21% 8% 11%			
	<i>Always</i>	<i>Nearly Always</i>	<i>Sometimes</i>	<i>Never</i>
<b>10. ABOUT BEING IN MY SCHOOL</b>				
I feel I do well at this school	58%	28%	11%	3%
Teachers at this school like me	66%	20%	11%	3%

11. Please draw two pictures or write about something:			
That might help you do even better at school		That stops you doing as well as you could at school	
Not talking/more quiet – 13% Less People in class – 3% Nothing – 1% Teachers helping more – 7% Trying harder – 2% Reading more - 3% Learning lots of new things – 3% More maths – 7% More homework – 1% Lexia and Toe-by-toe – 0.6% I should ask for help more – 0.6% Behave better – 0.6% Being on School Council – 0.6% Using calculators to check answers – 4% Private lessons – 1% More explanations/ teachers going slower – 3% More lessons in some subjects – 0.6% Not being ill during SATs – 0.6%		Nothing – 5% When it is too noisy – 29% People getting up and getting drinks – 1% When someone distracts me – 10% Scribbling – 1% Playing too much – 3% Bullying – 0.6% Jobs – 1% Not having private lessons – 1% English – 1% Not trying hard enough – 1% Teacher giving too easy work – 1% Being in a mood with someone – 0.6% Teacher going too fast – 0.6% Watching whiteboard for too long – 0.6% Getting bored in some lessons – 0.6% Having to study unnecessary subjects – 0.6%	
12. Please tick if you have been involved in any of the following:			
School Council	21%	Mini-bud	16%
School Newspaper	27%	Buddy	13%
Enterprise Group	16%	Mediator	9%
Pupils as Researchers	7%	Sports Leader	19%




*Thank you very much - your views will help us to make our school even better!*



## INFANT QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS SUMMARY

**Date: May 2010**

### **FEELING INCLUDED**

Please circle your answer.	 Yes	 Don't know	 No
<b>1. ABOUT BEING IN MY CLASS</b>			
I feel I belong to my class	58 – 94%	4 – 6%	0
I feel my class is a good place to be	56 – 90%	5 – 8%	1 – 2%
I feel I am listened to as much as any other pupil	49 – 79%	12 – 19%	1 – 2%
I feel my views count in this class	42 – 68%	18 – 29%	2 – 3%
I believe my teacher trusts me – NR – 1 2%	56 – 90%	4 – 6%	1 – 2%
<b>2. ABOUT BEING IN MY SCHOOL</b>			
I feel I belong to my school	54 – 87%	7 – 11%	1 – 2%
I feel my school is a good place to be	55 – 88%	6 – 10%	1 – 2%
I feel I'm important in this school	55 – 88%	6 – 10%	1 – 2%
I feel my views count in this school	40 – 65%	18 – 29%	4 – 6%

### **FEELING IN CONTROL**

<b>3. ABOUT BEING IN MY CLASS</b>			
I like being in my class	59 – 95%	2 – 3%	1 – 2%
I learn things which are useful to me	54 – 87%	8 – 13%	0
I learn things which are interesting	58 – 93%	3 – 5%	1 – 2%
If there was something I wanted to learn about I think my teacher would try and teach it NR – 1 – 2%	52 – 83%	6 – 10%	3 – 5%
My teacher checks with the class that we have understood things	56 – 90%	5 – 8%	1 – 2%
I feel I can ask my teacher to go over things again if I am not sure	55 – 90%	5 – 8%	1 – 2%
When she is teaching, my teacher goes too fast – NR – 1 – 2%	12 – 21%	2 – 3%	47 – 73%
When she is teaching, my teacher goes too slow – NR – 2 – 3%	13 – 21%	4 – 6%	43 – 70%
<b>4. ABOUT BEING IN MY SCHOOL</b>			
If I have a problem, my school tries to help me	58 – 93%	1 – 2%	3 – 5%
I think pupils in this school help make some of the decisions NR 1 – 2%	43 – 69%	12 – 19%	6 – 10%
I think the School Council helps pupils to get things done in school	47 – 75%	14 – 23%	1 – 2%
If I had a good idea or felt worried I feel I could share this with my teacher NR 2-3%	56 – 90%	3 – 5%	1 – 2%
If I had good idea or felt worried I feel I could share this with my head teacher – NR – 1- 2%	47 – 76%	7 – 11%	7 – 11%
I have used the worry bin NR – 3 – 5%	12 – 19%	9 – 15%	38 – 61%
<b>5. If you would like to, you can draw two pictures or write about something:</b>			
you enjoy learning	you don't enjoy learning		
Handwriting – 1 – 2%	Hurting others/being hurt – 3 – 5%		
Doing (hard) work – 2 – 3%	Noisy classroom – 1 – 2%		
Free play – 3 – 5%	No response – 12 – 23%		
Topic work – 10 – 16%	Creative – 3 – 5%		
Art/creative/food – 7 – 11%	Reading/writing/phonics – 19 – 30%		
Friendships – 1 – 2%	Going home – 2 – 3%		
Physical activity – 4 – 6%	Walking up the stairs – 1 – 2%		
Maths – 19 – 30%	Water play – 1 – 2%		

ICT – 1 – 2% Writing/Reading – 8 – 13% Construction – 2 – 3% Weekend – 1 – 2% Talking – 1 – 2% Wide range of subjects – 2 – 3%	Working – 2 – 3% Physical activity – 2 – 3% Cars – 1 – 2% Maths – 3 – 5% Topic – 4 – 6% Nothing – 1 – 2% Music – 1 – 2% Hard work – 2 – 3% Science – 1 – 2%
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### FEELING CONFIDENT

6. Please draw two pictures or write about something:			
you are good at learning		you find more difficult to learn	
Physical activities – 13 – 21% Writing/phonics/reading – 21 – 35% ICT – 1 – 2% Maths – 7 – 11% Art/creative – 3 – 5% Construction – 3 – 5% Good behaviour – 1 – 2% Music – 1 – 2% Being special person – 1 – 2% Home learning activities – 1 – 2% Wide range of subjects – 1 – 2% Topic – 7 – 11%		Physical activities – 11 – 18% Doing (hard) work – 3 – 5% Tidying up – 2 – 3% Phonics/reading/writing/handwriting – 15 – 24% Maths – 13 – 21% No response – 5 – 8% Playing with my brother – 1 – 2% Creative/art – 3 – 5% Construction – 2 – 3% RE – 2 – 3% Music – 1 – 2% Science – 2 – 3% Topic – 2 – 3%	
7. ABOUT BEING IN MY SCHOOL			
I am doing well at school	NR – 1 - 2%	55 – 88%	5 - 8% 1 – 2%
Teachers like me	NR – 1 – 2%	59 – 95%	2 – 3%
8. Please draw two pictures or write about something:			
That might help you do even better at school		That stops you doing as well as you could at school	
Maths – 3 – 5% Friends – 1 – 2% No response – 15 – 24% Concentrating – 1 – 2% Clever caterpillar – 1 – 2% Less playtime – 1 – 2% Quiet classroom – 2 – 3% More drawing – 3 – 5% Using non-fiction books – 2 – 3% Nothing – 1 – 2% Making models – 1 – 2% English/writing – 4 – 6% Using resources – 1 – 2% Sitting on a different table – 1 – 2% Careful listening – 1 – 2% Trying – 10 – 16% Help – 2 – 3% Doing more work – 4 – 6% ICT – 2 – 3% Sounding out – 1 – 2% When I am 5 – 1 – 2% Riding my bike – 1 – 2% Holding handles – 1 – 2%		Being slow – 1 – 2% Talking/noise/distraction – 28 – 45% Nothing – 4 – 6% Too much playtime – 1 – 2% No response – 21 – 32% Resources – 1 – 2% Not listening – 1 – 2% Work too hard – 3 – 5% Putting your feet down – 1 – 2% Stopping skipping – 1 – 2%	
9. Please tick if you are a:			
School Council Member	7 – 11%	Mini-bud	100% of possible Y2 pupils
10. Would you like to be:			
On the School Council – NR – 2-3%	45 – 73%	3 – 5%	12 – 19%
A Mini-bud – NR – 3 – 5%	41 – 66%	8 – 13%	10 – 15%

*Thank you very much - your views will help us to make our school even better!*

## **JUNIOR QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS SUMMARY**

**Date: May 2010**

We would like to know how you feel about being part of our school community. Please tell us what you think – remember there are no right and wrong answers.

**84 RESPONSES**

### **FEELING INCLUDED**

	<i>Always</i>	<i>Nearly Always</i>	<i>Sometimes</i>	<i>Never</i>	<i>No Response</i>
1. ABOUT BEING IN MY CLASS					
I feel I belong to my class	30%	39%	20%	10%	1%
I feel my class is a good place to be	29%	33%	32%	5%	1%
I feel I am listened to as much as any other pupil	14%	33%	37%	15%	2%
I feel my views count in this class	22%	33%	30%	13%	2%
I believe my teacher trusts me	48%	28%	18%	5%	1%
2. ABOUT BEING IN MY SCHOOL					
I feel I belong to my school	32%	24%	35%	6%	2%
I feel my school is a good place to be	27%	26%	31%	16%	0%
I feel I'm important in this school	20%	21%	35%	23%	0%
I feel my views count in this school	16%	30%	36%	17%	0%
3. If you have time and would like to, you can draw two pictures or write about a time when:					
you feel your views were listened to	you feel your views were not listened to				
Circle time/ class discussions x 25 Talking to Mrs. X x 6 Talking about our topic x 1 When we voted for the peg colours in the new building x 2 When I had a good idea x 2 Asking something x 2 When we made headdresses x 1 On the playground x 2 On School Council x 1 In SNAG x 3 In Assembly x 2 Questionnaires from PARs x 3	Telling the teacher something/In class x 4 When we do tallies & I'm the only one with my hand up x 1 When I said something and the teacher didn't put it on the board/ I'm not chosen x 3 Talking to my friends and they didn't listen x 11 People were laughing and not taking notice of me x 1 Never x 3 Student Teacher not listening to me x 3 When School Council made all decisions x 1 When I read out loud x 1 I wrote a letter and nothing changed x 1 In a class poem x 1 In Assembly x 2				
4. Can you think of any ways in which pupils could be more included in our school?					
More younger pupils involved in assembly/school x 4 More Mediators x 2 Bigger parts in the play x 1 We could have a making better tray where we put our ideas in/suggestions box x 6 People playing games at school that everyone likes x 2 People making more friends x 1 More dinner ladies x 1 Help everyone have friends on the yard x 2 Having more of a say in the new building x 1 More of a say in clubs in school x 3 Teachers not picking same pupils all the time x 2 Since I'm not Y5 I can't do SNAG or PARs x 2 Even more School Council members/different school council x 3 People help decide what we learn about x 4 Do more than 1 activity with more than 1 class x 2 If pupils do not feel they are always being watched x 1 Teacher could ask more questions x 1 More stuff to play with at break x 1 Bring team points back x 1 Include more pupils in out of school activities x 1 Stop teachers picking the same pupils over and over again x 1					

## FEELING IN CONTROL

	<i>Always</i>	<i>Nearly Always</i>	<i>Sometimes</i>	<i>Never</i>	<i>No Response</i>
<b>5. ABOUT BEING IN MY CLASS</b>					
I like being in my class	20%	44%	31%	5%	0%
I learn things which are useful to me	30%	40%	25%	4%	0%
I learn things which are interesting	23%	34%	29%	13%	1%
If there was something I wanted to learn about I think my teacher would try and teach it	22%	30%	28%	18%	3%
My teacher checks with the class that we have understood things	61%	21%	14%	2%	1%
I feel I can ask my teacher to go over things again if I am not sure	51%	18%	18%	12%	1%
When she is teaching, my teacher goes too fast	13%	15%	34%	38%	0%
When she is teaching, my teacher goes too slow	6%	5%	42%	46%	0%
<b>6. ABOUT BEING IN MY SCHOOL</b>					
If I have a problem, my school tries to help me	24%	32%	30%	14%	0%
I think pupils in this school help make some of the decisions	25%	27%	33%	20%	0%
I think the School Council helps pupils to get things done in school	24%	22%	34%	17%	1%
If I had a good idea or felt worried I feel I could share this with my teacher	33%	25%	29%	12%	1%
If I had good idea or felt worried I feel I could share this with my head teacher	19%	18%	27%	35%	1%
I have used the worry bin	4%	2%	31%	62%	1%
<b>7. If you have time and would like to, you can draw two pictures or write about something:</b>					
you would like to learn about in school			You don't like learning about		
Football/PE/Sport x 9 Dancing x 1 More Art x 8 More maths x 3 More science x 15 Chemistry x 1 Houses x 1    Topics x 3 Greek Alphabet x 1 More English x 1 More History x 17 More Geography x 6 Making things x 1 More ICT x 5 Animals x 5 Learning about famous people x 1 Cooking x 1 Sewing x 1			English x 13 Science x 1 Maths x 30 Sometimes PE x 3 Maths tests x 1 Nothing x 2 Division x 1 Geography x 3 RE x 21 History x 2 Irish Dancing x 1 PE x 1		

## FEELING CONFIDENT

	<i>Always</i>	<i>Nearly Always</i>	<i>Sometimes</i>	<i>Never</i>	<i>No Response</i>
<b>8. ABOUT BEING IN MY CLASS</b>					
I am good at learning science	36%	25%	26%	12%	2%
I am good at learning maths.	22%	38%	26%	12%	2%
I am good at learning English	27%	35%	28%	8%	2%
I am good at learning topic work	32%	33%	26%	5%	3%

9. Please draw two pictures or write about something:					
you are good at learning			you find more difficult to learn		
Art x 10 ICT x 6 Topic x 9 Maths x 17 Science x 13 English x 10 Geography x 1 History x 9 Sport/PE x 5 Most things as work is easy x 1			Something if I feel I can't do it x 1 Tricky things x 1 English x 17 Maths x 26 Tables x 1 SEAL x 1 Noise from the grass cutters x 1 Science x 8 Topic Work x 4 RE x 10 Geography x 2 History x 1		
	Always	Nearly Always	Sometimes	Never	No Response
10. ABOUT BEING IN MY SCHOOL					
I feel I do well at this school	22%	40%	29%	7%	2%
Teachers at this school like me	32%	37%	22%	7%	2%
11. Please draw two pictures or write about something:					
That might help you do even better at school			That stops you doing as well as you could at school		
Handwriting x 2 Working harder x 1 More explanations x 2 Putting my hand up more x 1 Learning my tables x 1 Learning division x 1 Easier maths/maths more interesting x 2 Class to be quieter x 6 Behave better x 1 More time to complete my work x 1 Wearing home clothes x 1 Art x 1 Doing mini tests x 1 Bring home maths booklet fill it in and bring it back x 1 Lessons to be more fun x 1 More IT x 1 Working with a partner x 1 Teachers not being so strict x 1 To have smaller classes x 1 Learning more x 1 New desks x 1 More encouragement x 1 Fun x 1 Learning to read better x 1 More people to try and help me at times x 3 Doing all our work on laptops x 1 Using calculators x 2 More freedom to choose what to do x 1 Times table grid x 1 Just having one teacher x 1 All classes have a raffle for prizes x 1 More praise and encouragement x 2 Not so much maths and English x 1 More maths resources x 1			Other people talking/messing x 30 Noise x 2 Uniform x 1 Maths x 1 Too much homework x 3 Not enough explanations x 2 Lesson to be less boring x 1 Topic work x 1 People not listening to me x 1 My friends being mean x 1 Going on more school trips x 1 Being pushed too hard x 1 Don't know x 1 Not having a calculator x 2 The helper teachers that help me are too close to me and I feel claustrophobic. I don't need help I only struggle at maths x 1		

12. Please tick if you have been involved in any of the following, or would like to be:					
	I am/have been involved	I would like to be		I am/have been involved	I would like to be
School Council	34%	28%	Mini-bud	50%	8%
School Newspaper	31%	32%	Buddy	21%	33%
Enterprise Group	18%	38%	Mediator	7%	31%
Pupils as Researchers	15%	47%	Sports Leader	5%	43%
% of pupils participating in any activity			Want to be but not involved		No Response
82%			10%		8%

*Thank you very much - your views will help us to make our school even better!*

## **Appendix 7**

## PARENT QUESTIONNAIRE

**Date: March 2008**

The staff and Governors at Xxx Primary School would like to know what parents and carers think of our school. Your response to this questionnaire is confidential and should therefore remain anonymous, however we would like to know which year group your child is in. It will be combined with those of other parents and carers and analysed as part of the school's self-evaluation process. If you have more than one child you can complete the questionnaire twice **or** if the responses are the same when considering each child simply complete the box at the bottom of the questionnaire. Please return by **26th March 2008**.

You should give your opinion by ticking one of the boxes in each line to show that you **Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree** or **Don't Know** with the statement.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Don't Know
1) The school encourages me to play an active part in my child's education.				
2) I find it easy to approach the school with questions or problems I have to do with my children.				
3) The school welcomes me and deals with any difficult issues sensitively.				
4) The school gives me an understanding of what is being taught.				
5) The school keeps me informed about my child's progress.				
6) My child is making good progress because the teaching is good at the school.				
7) The school encourages children to get involved in more than just daily lessons.				
8) I am satisfied with the amount of homework my child is given.				
9) The school's values and attitudes have a positive effect on my child.				
10) I feel that my child is safe and well cared for at school.				
11) The school has high expectations of its students.				
12) The school takes account of children's views.				
13) I can see improvements in the standard of my child's writing.				
14) My child enjoys school.				
15) I have confidence in the school.				
16) I receive adequate notice of school events.				

Please turn over



17) What are the strengths of the school?
18) How do you think the school could be improved?
19) In what ways would you like to be more involved in the school? (if any)
20) What other comments would you like to make? (if any)

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire. Your views are important and the information we gather will contribute to our School Improvement Plan.

M Xxx  
(Head Teacher)

M Xxx  
(Chair of Governors)

<u>TEACHER(S)</u>	<u>YEAR GROUP</u>
M RXx	Reception
M 1Xx	Y1
M 2Xx	Y2
M 3Xx	Y3/4
M 4Xx	Y4
M 5Xx	Y5
M 6Xx	Y6

The responses I have given in this questionnaire cover \_\_\_\_ children in the following Year Groups \_\_\_\_\_.

PLEASE RETURN TO SCHOOL BY **WEDNESDAY 26th MARCH 2008**. THANK YOU.

## PARENT QUESTIONNAIRE

**Date: June 2009**

The staff and Governors at Xxxxx Primary School would like to know what parents and carers think of our school. Your response to this questionnaire is confidential and should therefore remain anonymous, however we would like to know which year group your child is in. It will be combined with those of other parents and carers and analysed as part of the school's self-evaluation process. If you have more than one child you can complete the questionnaire twice **or** if the responses are the same when considering each child simply complete the box at the bottom of the questionnaire. Please return by **17<sup>th</sup> June 2009**. You should give your opinion by ticking one of the boxes in each line to indicate your response to each statement. Please add any additional comments to questions 17 – 20.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Don't Know
1) My child is making good progress at school.				
2) The school promotes high standards of behaviour.				
3) The school welcomes me and deals with any difficult issues sensitively.				
4) The school gives me an understanding of what is being taught.				
5) The school keeps me informed about my child's progress.				
6) My child is making good progress because the teaching is good at the school.				
7) The school encourages children to get involved in more than just daily lessons.				
8) I am satisfied with the amount of homework my child is given.				
9) The school's values and attitudes have a positive effect on my child.				
10) I feel that my child is safe and well cared for at school.				
11) The school has high expectations of its students.				
12) The school takes account of children's views.				
13) I think that the building plans for the school are a good thing.				
14) My child is happy at school.				
15) The school is well led and managed by the Head Teacher, Senior Leadership Team and Governors.				
16) I receive adequate notice of school events.				

Please turn over

17) What are the strengths of the school?
18) How do you think the school could be improved?
19) We are continually developing the way pupils can have an input into our school – for example through our School Council, Pupils as Researchers and Family groups as well as through in-class discussions and pupil feedback into teaching and learning. What are your views on this and do you have any other suggestions of ways in which pupils can be involved?
20) What other comments would you like to make? (if any)

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire. Your views are important and the information we gather will contribute to our School Improvement Plan.

M Xxxxx  
(Head Teacher)

M Xxxxxx  
(Chair of Governors)

<u>TEACHER(S)</u>	<u>YEAR GROUP</u>
M RXxx	Reception
M 1Xxx	Y1
M 2Xxx	Y2
M 3Xxx	Y3
M 4Xxx	Y4
M 5Xxx	Y5
M 6Xxx	Y6

<p>The responses I have given in this questionnaire cover ____ children in the following Year Groups _____.</p> <p>_____.</p>
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PLEASE RETURN TO SCHOOL BY **WEDNESDAY 17<sup>th</sup> June 2009**. THANK YOU.

## PARENT QUESTIONNAIRE

**Date: May 2010**

The staff and Governors at Xxxxx Primary School would like to know what parents and carers think of our school. Your response to this questionnaire is confidential and should therefore remain anonymous, however we would like to know which year group your child is in. It will be combined with those of other parents and carers and analysed as part of the school's self-evaluation process. If you have more than one child you can complete the questionnaire twice **or** if the responses are the same when considering each child simply complete the box at the bottom of the questionnaire. Please return by **27<sup>th</sup> May 2010**.

You should give your opinion by ticking one of the boxes in each line to indicate your response to each statement. Please add any additional comments to questions 17 – 20.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Don't Know	No Response
1) My child is making good progress at school.					
2) The school promotes high standards of behaviour.					
3) The school welcomes me and deals with any difficult issues sensitively.					
4) The school gives me an understanding of what is being taught.					
5) The school keeps me informed about my child's progress.					
6) My child is making good progress because the teaching is good at the school.					
7) The school encourages children to get involved in more than just daily lessons.					
8) I am satisfied with the amount of homework my child is given.					
9) The school's values and attitudes have a positive effect on my child.					
10) I feel that my child is safe and well cared for at school.					
11) The school has high expectations of its students.					
12) The school takes account of children's views.					
13) I am happy that we will be moving into the 'new' building in September.					
14) My child is happy at school.					
15) The school is well led and managed by the Head Teacher, Senior Leadership Team and Governors.					
16) I receive adequate notice of school events.					

Please turn over

17) What are the strengths of the school?
18) How do you think the school could be improved?
19) We are continually developing the way pupils can have an input into our school – for example through our School Council, Pupils as Researchers and Family groups as well as through in-class discussions and pupil feedback into teaching and learning. What are your views on this and do you have any other suggestions of ways in which pupils can be involved?
20) What other comments would you like to make? (if any)

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire. Your views are important and the information we gather will contribute to our School Improvement Plan.

M Xxx  
(Head Teacher)

M Xxx  
(Chair of Governors)

<u>TEACHER(S)</u>	<u>YEAR GROUP</u>
M RXxx	Reception
M 1Xxx	Y1
M 2Xxx	Y2
M 3Xxx	Y3/4
M 5Xxx	Y4/5
M 6Xxx	Y6

The responses I have given in this questionnaire cover \_\_\_\_\_ children in the following Year Groups \_\_\_\_\_.

PLEASE RETURN TO SCHOOL BY **THURSDAY 27<sup>th</sup> MAY 2010**. THANK YOU

## **PARENT QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS SUMMARY**

**Date: March 2008**

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Don't Know
1) The school encourages me to play an active part in my child's education.	19%	62%	15%	4%
2) I find it easy to approach the school with questions or problems I have to do with my children.	46%	39%	15%	0%
3) The school welcomes me and deals with any difficult issues sensitively.	39%	46%	15%	0%
4) The school gives me an understanding of what is being taught.	15%	81%	4%	0%
5) The school keeps me informed about my child's progress.	12%	62%	27%	0%
6) My child is making good progress because the teaching is good at the school.	19%	50%	19%	12%
7) The school encourages children to get involved in more than just daily lessons.	23%	50%	4%	23%
8) I am satisfied with the amount of homework my child is given.	15%	54%	19%	12%
9) The school's values and attitudes have a positive effect on my child.	23%	73%	0%	4%
10) I feel that my child is safe and well cared for at school.	35%	65%	0%	0%
11) The school has high expectations of its students.	19%	46%	19%	16%
12) The school takes account of children's views.	15%	50%	8%	27%
13) I can see improvements in the standard of my child's writing.	19%	58%	23%	0%
14) My child enjoys school.	27%	69%	4%	0%
15) I have confidence in the school.	27%	61%	4%	8%
16) I receive adequate notice of school events.	38%	54%	8%	0%

Please turn over

**17) What are the strengths of the school?**

Teachers very friendly and easy to talk to – also classroom assistants.  
We feel school is well-organised and events are arranged well in advance.  
We feel our child is progressing and learning well thanks to the teaching and friendly staff in the classroom.  
Recognise and respond to needs of individual children.  
Imaginative teaching. Not too academically focussed. Water bottles good idea.  
Children are well-behaved and polite. Teachers are very approachable.  
Local feel, lovely grounds/environment. I like standards set by school for kids.  
I like the multiracial environment in my son's school.  
Information is regularly shared with pares/carers.  
A strong sense of community – children and parents.  
Assemblies encourage all pupils to get together and the children receive good learning about current affairs and awareness of their world.  
Information is good at the beginning of term when topics to be covered were highlighted.  
Communication through newsletter is appreciated.  
Good atmosphere. Lots of activities.  
Approachable staff.  
Plenty of interesting topics and creative activities for the children.  
The behaviour point system seems to motivate them well.  
Broad curriculum (but religious education still appears to be predominantly Christian reinforced by prayers at the end of the day).  
Well rounded approach to education.  
Open and accessible. Our kids are happy here.  
Very good teaching staff, appear pro-active and positive. Encourage children to learn.  
Encourages extra-curricular activities.  
Wider-opportunities than just learning basic skills.  
Small classes. School Council. SEAL time.

**18) How do you think the school could be improved?**

More after school activities for Reception.  
Making access to the school office suitable for pushchairs/wheelchairs etc.  
Water bottles could be beside the child or children reminded to drink. Timekeeping – out of school on time. Wet play videos known as 'scary' videos. Could these be educational?  
Parents evening every term especially for children who are below national average.  
My child is never going to be able to write correctly without proper instruction on how to form letters – my child does not start letters in the correct place and goes up instead of down.  
New buildings (easier said than done I know!)  
Less paperwork – I know school is trying to encourage involvement with parents but I think sometimes there is an overload. Could it not be put on the internet for easy access and only sent to those who request it?  
Maybe focus on one charity per year (get kids to choose one?) instead of lots.  
Teach more foreign languages (the basics).  
There is a sense of the school assuming parents/carers know what is expected because things happened like this last year – this is no good if your child is new to school.  
It would be helpful if school started and ended at the stated times. I still have concern about the top pedestrian gate being left open all day - could this not be locked from 9.15 to 3pm? More playground/playtime facilities e.g. encourage traditional playground games/activities to promote teamwork, physical activity.  
More occasions of the 'school bus' as on TV.  
I would like my children to get regular homework each night to be returned the next day (say 5 mins each night for consistency).  
I would like homework to be done in a book which gets marked so we can see the teachers' comments. Handwriting is not a strength of my children.  
To be aware of children's individual home circumstances and be more sensitive to them (however this is generally OK – it is the odd occasion when problems occur).  
More consideration for full time working parents when meetings are planned e.g. 'Meet the teacher'. More regular Parents' Nights.  
If the school want children to do 'school' writing then they should practice one letter each day in school and the foundations should be laid down correctly from day one.  
More music, drama, art and sport.  
More structured playtime activities and more lunchtime supervision.  
A small element of inappropriate behaviour from certain individuals which spoils things for all, particularly at break-times.

**19) In what ways would you like to be more involved in the school? (if any)**

Would like to be more involved in classroom activities.

I feel the school has given me ample chance to be involved only personal circumstances stopping me although – is there a school newspaper? Would be happy to help if there is.

I would happily be involved in the PTA with sufficient notice of events/meetings etc.

To have more information on how to help with homework where appropriate e.g. particular methods used for maths/English which may have changed since my school days or are particular to the curriculum.

Would like to be asked to help more in class when not working.

None OK as it is.

**20) What other comments would you like to make? (if any)**

Would like more supervision over what children eat at lunchtime and maybe food made more fun for younger ones.

As parents we were concerned about change of Reception teacher however whole process was done so smoothly we found we had nothing to worry about.

We have not had any difficult issues to bring up with the school but feel that if we did we would be welcomed into school to discuss these sensitively as all staff seem approachable and caring within our child's class.

Not enough concentration on reading, writing, spelling.

I have been disappointed about the lack of information around the teaching of reading. I would like to be able to encourage my child to sound letters/attempt to write and read the same way these things are taught in school but much is left to guesswork and I learnt to read many years ago.

I think a regular suggestion leaflet for more fundraising ideas – how about an end of year BBQ party on the last week? Or towards the end of term? Parents and children could buy a 'family ticket' and could donate some food, have some games like football or rounders and some music? Tuck shop on? Bring your own food/drink?

Overall we are happy with the school. The staff are approachable and supportive. Homework is my only real concern as my kids need the discipline of regular work which I would like to see returned for the teachers' comments.

Children should not watch DVDs/Videos. When the school does not have sufficient staff appropriate staff should be in place.

Spellings should be corrected or children will never learn right from wrong.

Like the salad bar and singing. More please!

Discipline has improved. Too much homework.

Disappointed with regards to xxx attitude toward parents and children. Contact I have had with xxx has no empathetic or people skills whatsoever.

My child had had a much more settled time this year. Huge credit to all staff.

Small class size is a definite advantage.



## PARENT QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS SUMMARY

**Date: June 2009**

Dear Parents/Carers,

Thank you for taking the time to complete the questionnaires distributed before the Summer holidays. We had 38 responses in total and they have since been analysed and we would like to share the main findings with you.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Don't Know	No Response
1) My child is making good progress at school	29%	63%	5%	3%	0%
2) The school promotes good standards of behaviour	34%	58%	3%	5%	0%
3) The school welcomes me and deals with any difficult issues sensitively	39%	45%	11%	5%	0%
4) The school gives me an understanding of what is being taught	26%	63%	11%	0%	0%
5) The school keeps me informed about my child's progress	23%	66%	11%	0%	0%
6) My child is making good progress because the teaching is good at the school	37%	55%	5%	3%	0%
7) The school encourages children to get involved in more than just daily lessons	34%	58%	5%	3%	0%
8) I am satisfied with the amount of homework my child is given	23%	61%	16%	0%	0%
9) The school's values and attitudes have a positive effect on my child	37%	50%	8%	5%	0%
10) I feel that my child is safe and well cared for at school	45%	53%	3%	0%	0%
11) The school has high expectations of its students	18%	55%	8%	16%	3%
12) The school takes account of children's views	21%	50%	5%	24%	0%
13) I think that the building plans for the school are a good thing	29%	37%	5%	26%	3%
14) My child is happy at school	45%	42%	8%	3%	3%
15) The school is well led and managed by the Head Teacher, Senior Leadership Team and Governors	29%	58%	11%	3%	0%
16) I receive adequate notice of school events.	26%	55%	18%	0%	0%

Please turn over

**The main findings from your written responses were very important as well and included:**

'A supportive, caring environment for pupils that encourages good standards of behaviour.'

'The children have a good sense of unity.'

'Good leadership and policies on bullying.'

'Learning is fun.'

'Children are happy.'

'Parents views are welcomed and staff are very approachable.'

'The teachers and school staff are skilled and committed, promoting out of school activities as well as all aspects of learning.'

'A family school.'

As well as many more!

Your positive responses and comments are very useful and confirm that we are being successful in many aspects of school life.

However, your suggestions on how to improve areas of school life are also very informative. Some parents feel that they don't receive adequate notice of school events. At the beginning of the school year we do send out a yearly diary detailing many events including parents' evenings, school performances and sports day. We do our very best to inform parents as soon as we are aware of any changes or additions to the timetable through the Xxxx Force or letters home. In order to keep parents more up to date we will be displaying timetables in classroom windows facing onto the yard.

Another area that was commented upon was homework, we aim to follow Government guidelines on the amount of homework our pupils receive (Y1/2 pupils – 1 hour per week, Y3/4 pupils – 1.5 hours per week and Y5/6 pupils – 2.5 hours per week). If you feel your child is spending longer than this please speak to their class teacher, if you feel that they are not spending as long as this please encourage them to read a range of books and practise their times tables or number bonds.

Parents also felt that we were not competitive enough, particularly during Sports' Day, in the previous academic year we had competitive year group races at the end of Sports' Day and our pupils competed in basketball tournaments, boys and girls mixed and girls football matches and also in the football league cups, this will also continue this academic year. We have been recently trialling a new way of learning spellings within school and parents have commented about how children were not taking spelling lists home. As a staff we have agreed that children in years 2-6 will receive spellings on a weekly basis with children in Reception and year 1 receiving them when appropriate.

Other suggestions from parents included the introduction of a SNAG group to report on school meals, having a 'Pupils' Suggestions Box' and having a day when some pupils take on the role of the teachers for a while so they can experience life as a teacher!

Your suggestions and comments have been very useful and although they are too varied to list and comment upon in this letter please be assured that we are taking the time to consider each point and as a staff we are already putting things in motion and working together on the issues raised.

Thank you again for taking the time to complete the questionnaires, your comments and opinions are very useful. If you would like to discuss any of the comments you raised on the questionnaire please do not hesitate to contact school.

Yours sincerely,

M Xxxx  
(Head Teacher)

M Xxxxxx  
(Chair of Governors)

## PARENT QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS SUMMARY

**Date: May 2010**

The staff and Governors at Xxxx Primary School would like to know what parents and carers think of our school. Your response to this questionnaire is confidential and should therefore remain anonymous, however we would like to know which year group your child is in. It will be combined with those of other parents and carers and analysed as part of the school's self-evaluation process. If you have more than one child you can complete the questionnaire twice **or** if the responses are the same when considering each child simply complete the box at the bottom of the questionnaire. Please return by **27<sup>th</sup> May 2010**.

You should give your opinion by ticking one of the boxes in each line to indicate your response to each statement. Please add any additional comments to questions 17 – 20. **29 Responses**

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Don't Know	No Response
1) My child is making good progress at school.	28%	69%	0%	3%	0%
2) The school promotes high standards of behaviour.	31%	66%	0%	3%	0%
3) The school welcomes me and deals with any difficult issues sensitively.	48%	48%	3%	0%	0%
4) The school gives me an understanding of what is being taught.	34%	62%	0%	3%	0%
5) The school keeps me informed about my child's progress.	21%	76%	3%	0%	0%
6) My child is making good progress because the teaching is good at the school.	34%	62%	0%	3%	0%
7) The school encourages children to get involved in more than just daily lessons.	38%	52%	0%	10%	0%
8) I am satisfied with the amount of homework my child is given.	34%	48%	17%	0%	0%
9) The school's values and attitudes have a positive effect on my child.	31%	55%	0%	14%	0%
10) I feel that my child is safe and well cared for at school.	34%	55%	7%	3%	5%
11) The school has high expectations of its students.	17%	55%	7%	21%	0%
12) The school takes account of children's views.	35%	48%	7%	10%	0%
13) I am happy that we will be moving into the 'new' building in September.	62%	21%	0%	14%	3%
14) My child is happy at school.	41%	45%	7%	7%	0%
15) The school is well led and managed by the Head Teacher, Senior Leadership Team and Governors.	31%	45%	3%	17%	3%
16) I receive adequate notice of school events.	31%	55%	10%	3%	0%

Please turn over

<p>17) What are the strengths of the school?</p> <p>Activities after school  Teacher/Parent Partnership working  After School Clubs/Extra curricular activities x 4  Quality of Teaching/the teachers x 5  Promotion of good behaviour and consideration for others  Building good self-esteem and confidence  It is forward thinking  Safe, friendly environment which my child “loves” – in her words.  Caring attitude towards children x 2  Friendliness  Community atmosphere x 2  X is a very friendly school, it integrates different year groups very well which encourages different friendships and looking out for each other. The children are definitely the first priority of all at X.  Encouraging friendships/support amongst different age groups.  Approachable teachers &amp; low staff turnover promote a consistent stable place for the children to learn. Special needs are considered in order to help and support children.  School values and attitudes  An overall feeling about the school: great environment for learning. Well-structured in approach, visits good for variety, as are extra-curricular activities. Strong, but fair-minded teacher.  An underlying Christian ethos even though it isn't a church school.  An active head teacher who is involved with the school and very approachable.  The school is safe and when I send my child here I don't have to worry about him.  It doesn't put too much pressure on the children  It has increased my child's confidence  There is not too much homework – thank you!  Excellent teaching staff. The school is run well and very organised. All the staff work hard. They expect the best behaviour from all pupils.</p>
<p>18) How do you think the school could be improved?</p> <p>It would be nice to know what goes on at Governors meetings e.g. what has been decided for the school, just some kind of brief summary as to any decisions or outcomes that will affect/benefit the school and children. The PTA keeps parents up to date- it would be nice for the Governors also.  By concentrating a little more on what is happening now rather than too much into the future.  The school could be improved by every class including only one year group.  Not aware of any at this time.  More structured homework/more homework x 2  Too many restrictions at playtime – children should be allowed to play ball games at breaks and dinner times.  Cleaner dinner trays  If a child is absent could a check be made to see if they've missed any handouts.  By enforcing your uniform policy to all pupils so that competition for i.e. footwear (trainers) does not become an issue which later can lead to bullying/ stricter homework x 2  Gates should be secure – I feel the school is vulnerable.  Less disruption to classes from changes of teachers.  Go back to basics on spellings and tables  5 mins homework per night to be in next day.  I think this is another of X's strengths and can say that my son particularly enjoys Family Groups.  I think current problems are more about the physical environment in terms of health and safety in outside areas and cloakrooms so hopefully they will be a thing of the past soon!  Better facilities – sporting equipment &amp; after school sporting activities. (R parent)  Work with sports centres, other contractors to provide activities during holidays (R parent)  I think it is an excellent idea to have a School Council encouraging more responsibilities for pupils.  Going back to basics a touch. I'd suggest there's too many forms and this can lead to information overload. It is possible to remain informed of face-to-face communication or via website: most people have access these days and it is poor that the school site is so outmoded. With talk of cuts and all the money raising good will that goes on, it's a shame to spend so much on unnecessary box-ticking paperwork (waste of resources).  Having separate year groups instead of split classes. Smaller class sizes and more regular support in classes.  I am very concerned that it may be possible that from September Year 5 may be mixed with year 6.  Having had a child just go through year 6 the whole year is focussed on SATs and this is not fair for the year 5. I would appreciate as much notice as possible if this will be the case as I would explore other options for my children.</p>

19) We are continually developing the way pupils can have an input into our school – for example through our School Council, Pupils as Researchers and Family groups as well as through in-class discussions and pupil feedback into teaching and learning. What are your views on this and do you have any other suggestions of ways in which pupils can be involved?

It is really positive and helps the children to see they are important and worth listening to – Self-esteem building

I think it is very valuable and I like the way Junior and Infant pupils work together.

While it is a good idea for the children to be encouraged to think and have input I don't feel too much emphasis should be placed on discussions.

I agree with the above methods and would encourage it to continue.

It's a good idea

Need to be stricter with uniform policy.

Suggestion boxes

I feel my child is not yet mature enough to be very helpful in shaping the future of the school. Older children probably have enough avenues in school to make their views known. (Y1 parent)

Craig's sports club is excellent.

Pupils seem to really enjoy the variety.

We think all of these groups are brilliant but no more please! Don't overcomplicate the process.

I support the idea of the School Council and the opportunity to have a say in what they would like to happen in school, however I don't agree with children having the opportunity to comment on the running of the school i.e. teachers etc as they are too young to grasp the enormity of the task.

I agree with pupils' input being put forward. I feel it's important their views are heard and considered. However, pupils' opinions should just be one fraction of the information used to develop new teaching ideas as "teachers know best"!

20) What other comments would you like to make? (if any)

Communication within the school is good, however I would ask that more notice be given for events that require sponsorship. This would be beneficial to the school as well as it would allow us as parents time to seek more sponsors.

My son receives homework sporadically – I would like to see more consistency.

I would like to know how my son compares to his peers.

My son is making good progress due to the strategies that have been put in place by the SENCO.

We still have a high level of incidents where my child is on the receiving end of unsupervised rough play in the playground.

Due to current school set-up and my child's SENs he never seems to enjoy school. I think he constantly struggles just to cope with his school day.

I feel there has been a lot of instability for my child this year and would like to see this re-dressed in the new school year. Too many changes is not always a good thing.

I am a little concerned that personal possessions are not as safe as they should be. Another talk on respecting people's property (i.e. not stealing), may be in order!

The new reading books are superb, colourful and engaging.

Both my children are very poor at spelling and will only learn them if set by the teacher and tests.

Support such as Lexia is great but not always consistent.

We think X is a fantastic and pro-active influence on the children and deserves commendation for his role – he goes far beyond what could be expected of him. He is so enthusiastic and approachable to parents and children alike.

We are pleased that our child has had visits from learning support services and look forward to her continuing to make further progress.

I have been very happy with my child in this school. I feel satisfied with his development both socially and educationally. Thank you, X!

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire. Your views are important and the information we gather will contribute to our School Improvement Plan.

Mrs.Xxx

(Head Teacher)

Mrs. Xxx

(Chair of Governors)

<u>TEACHER(S)</u>	<u>YEAR GROUP</u>
M RXxx	Reception
M 1Xxx	Y1
M 2Xxx	Y2
M 3Xxx	Y3/4
M 5Xxx	Y4/5
M 6Xxx	Y6

The responses I have given in this questionnaire cover \_\_\_\_ children in the following Year Groups\_\_\_\_\_.

PLEASE RETURN TO SCHOOL BY **THURSDAY 27<sup>th</sup> MAY 2010**. THANK YOU.

## **Appendix 8**

5<sup>th</sup> July 2008

Dear

As you are aware, our year 5 pupils have been trained up as Sports Leaders by Mr. Xxxx, PE teacher from Xxxxx School Durham. The pupils designed their own Sports Leader shirts and Mr. Bxxxx had these printed for the pupils. As part of this role, they were assisting at the Multi-sports event at Xxxxx School yesterday where they were responsible for helping to organise schools in the different events. Our Sports Leaders undertook a variety of tasks during the day including preparing groups for the activities, leading children to the starting point, starting races, selecting winners, leading children back to their school groups and most difficult of all, ensuring pupils who were finished quickly were organised and occupied productively whilst they waited on the next event.

I am writing to inform you that your child, Xxxx was an absolute credit to our school and carried out his duties brilliantly. There was so much positive feedback about our children from staff and head teachers from the other schools attending that I could not begin to list the comments made. Suffice to say that the staff from Xxxxx School commented that their organisational skills and people management skills were exception and many were seen as 'teachers of the future'!

I thought you might appreciate this letter which may serve a as a record of Xxxx's outstanding contribution to this event – you should feel very proud!

With every good wish,

Yours sincerely,

Mrs. Sandra Whitton  
Head Teacher

## **Appendix 9**



## **PUPIL CHARTER: INFANTS**

**In our school every person matters. At Xxxx Primary we all try to:**

### **Show Respect by**

- Trusting and listening to one another.
- Speaking appropriately to everyone.
- Celebrating each other's personal achievements.
- Treating everyone fairly.

### **Reduce Bullying by**

- Taking action on any kind of bullying.
- Having clear systems and sanctions that everyone knows about and follows.
- Having safe havens and trusted people to report bullying to.

### **Tackle Racism by**

- Taking action on any kind of racism.
- Having a clear policy which everyone knows about and understands.
- Learning more about different cultures and religions.

### **Contribute to Gender Equality by**

- Treating everyone fairly.
- Taking action on sexist behaviour.

### **Consider Disability by**

- Making sure that everyone can be part of all aspects of school life.
- Taking name-calling seriously and treating it the same as other kinds of bullying.

### **Have a Voice by**

- Using the School Council to discuss policies and issues.
- Making sure that all members of the school community are listened to.
- Pupils helping to decide what happens in school.

***We believe this is important to help us understand each other***

## **PUPIL CHARTER: JUNIOR**

**In our school every person matters. At Xxxx Primary we all try to:**

### **Show Respect by**

- Trusting and listening to one another.
- Speaking appropriately to everyone.
- Celebrating each other's personal achievements.
- Treating everyone fairly.

### **Reduce Bullying by**

- Taking action on any kind of bullying.
- Having clear systems and sanctions that everyone knows about and follows.
- Having safe havens and trusted people to report bullying to.

### **Tackle Racism by**

- Taking action on any kind of racism.
- Having a clear policy which everyone knows about and understands.
- Learning more about different cultures and religions.

### **Tackle Homophobia by**

- Taking the issue seriously and not using words like 'gay' in the wrong way.
- Treating it like other forms of bullying and always dealing with it.

### **Contribute to Gender Equality by**

- Treating everyone fairly.
- Taking action on sexist behaviour.

### **Consider Disability by**

- Making sure that everyone can be part of all aspects of school life.
- Taking name-calling seriously and treating it the same as other kinds of bullying.

### **Have a Voice by**

- Using the School Council to discuss policies and issues.
- Making sure that all members of the school community are listened to.
- Pupils helping to decide what happens in school.

***We believe this is important to help us understand each other***